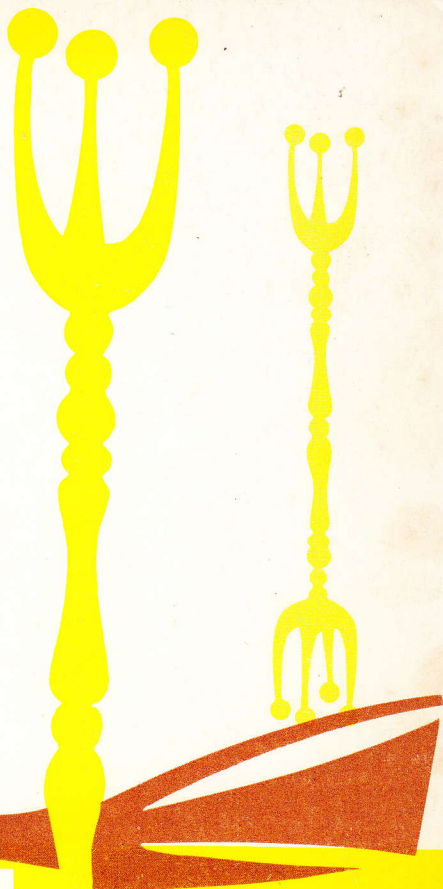


**AENEAS
CHIGWEDERE**

**BIRTH
of
BANTU
AFRICA**



BIRTH OF BANTU AFRICA

This is the author's third publication. It deals with a subject in which he is deeply involved — history. In this book he traces and analyses the various communities on the continent. For he believes that "the study of the history of Black Africa is largely a study of the history of the Bantu race."

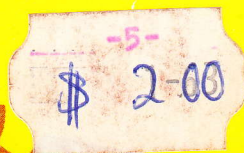
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BIRTH OF BANTU AFRICA

A. S. CHIGWEDERE

A Member of the ZIMBABWE GROUP OF AUTHORS.

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INTRODUCTION

The birth of Bantu Africa herein referred to has nothing to do with the creation of the physical mass of the continent of Africa. It concerns the creation of the race we today call Bantu and the occupation by this race of the land mass of the continent of Africa. It is historical in the sense that it concerns the emergence of a new race; it is both historical and geographical in that it concerns the physical occupation of the land mass of Africa by this race.

It is necessary to be aware of the delicate differences between the Negro and the Bantu. The birth of the Negro also meant the birth of the ancestors of the Bantu. Today historians and anthropologists tend to talk about the "true Negroes" and the Bantu. However, if we go back to the days of the slave trade, we find that every African was described as Negro, and no references were made to any differences between Negro and Bantu. In linguistic terms, there is a difference. But these linguistic and other cultural differences came about as a result of later historical developments and not different ethnic origins.

To many historians and anthropologists, it may appear too adventurous of me to delve into the subject of the birth and spread into all Africa of the Bantu race. But those who have read my "From Mutapa to Rhodes" might possibly have anticipated such a development. There, I emphasized that the book itself was of more than Zimbabwean significance. And I stated that it could mark the beginning of a new history of Africa. I can claim that I am now in a position to prove the validity of my argument.

Whilst the Negro might be at least ten thousand years old, the Bantu is less than two thousand years old. Indeed, while the Bantu were certainly in existence by the sixth Christian century, there was no Bantu Africa in the year 600 A.D. I would go even further, to say that Bantu Africa was very much in her infancy by the year 1 000 A.D. This may sound startling but the evidence available, as I will show, is almost conclusive on this point.

We cannot escape the fact that Africa south of the Sahara is largely Bantu, which is tantamount to saying that Black Africa is largely Bantu. This being the case, it means that the study of the history of Black Africa is largely a study of the history of the Bantu race. It follows too that the role played by Black Africa in world affairs today is largely the role played by the Bantu race. The history of Africa south of the Sahara without the Bantu can only be a history of the Khoikhoi and the San people (Bushmen and Hottentots) who are of no political consequence in the world community of today. This therefore means that for as long as we do not know the history of the Bantu race, we cannot claim to know the history of the continent of Africa.

The seed of historical Bantu Africa was sown in the north-eastern corner of the continent and germinated in the same corner. The stem of the new Bantu plant grew up in the Nile Valley; the main branches of the new Bantu plant spread towards East Africa, Central Equatorial Africa and West Africa. By the year 1 000 A.D. the tips of the sub-branches of the new Bantu plant were extending

to almost every corner of the continent south of the Sahara. At this stage, we can almost legitimately talk of Bantu Africa as being in existence. This is not to say that there was no further growth.

Any student of African customs and traditions who has managed to study two or more vastly separated regions of Africa must have been startled by the similarities between those regions. Differences there are and must be, as a result of different historical and cultural developments after the initial separation of the communities studied. In spite of these differences and the fact that the communities might have parted a thousand years ago, the similarities are nevertheless striking. It may be only now that we can really start to appreciate that those similarities are accounted for by a common ancestry in one geographical region. Many there are who guessed this possibility but it has not been so far looked upon as a historical fact.

The most abiding element of African culture is its religion. Material aspects of culture change easily, but not African religion. The material culture of South-East Africa altered due to contacts with the Moorish traders in the centuries around 1 000 A.D.; it changed further as a result of contacts with the Portuguese after 1 500. West African culture changed as a result of Berber and Arab intrusion before 1 500 and European intrusion after 1 500; South African material culture changed after the advent of the Dutch from 1652. But in all these areas, African religion tenaciously held on and, to this day, it is a force to be reckoned with.

It is largely through African religion that we will be able to unearth our history, just as it is largely through Shona religion that I have been able to unearth Shona history. African religion is not independent of African history. One cannot unravel the history of the religion of any African community without at the same time becoming involved in the political history of that community, and vice versa. Archaeology helps us to discover occupation sites, the periods of the occupation of those sites and elements of the material culture of the communities who occupied them. But it is not able to tell us the full identity of the occupants of the sites. African religion can provide this information. If the colonial regimes had managed to destroy our religion permanently, I am afraid that most of our history would remain in the realms of legend. But because this religion is so tenacious and because it is not independent of our history, it enables us to unravel important threads of that history.

To give a good example of this, our West African cousins look upon their "divinities", or most of them, as emanations of God and never as historical figures. For as long as this remains the position, they will never manage to uncover their early history. Until the publication of my "From Mutapa to Rhodes", the great African spirits of Zimbabwe were brushed aside as emanations, of God and equivalent to the great West African divinities. But it is now through them that we have been able to unearth the early history of this country. It is they who are now enabling us to link the early history of this country with the early histories of their cousins in other regions of Africa.

They have emerged as pure and simple historical figures. This demonstrates not only the tenacity of African religion but its usefulness, its reliability as a source of our history.

The most important fact that emerges clearly from this research is that after a period of development, the new Bantu race segmented into three Families which severed their blood relationships and in that way developed into three independent communities or tribes, as some would choose to call them. For centuries, each of these three segments has retained its major distinguishing marks. Of course, as the centuries rolled by, each of the three segments subdivided again and again, to create a multiplicity of new communities and sub-communities which today we call tribes and sub-tribes. But in spite of this, the majority of these communities and sub-communities have retained the main distinguishing features of the original three segments that started in north-east Africa more than two thousand years ago. By virtue of this, it is possible to trace the modern Bantu communities backwards to the original three Bantu segments. That is the main objective of this study.

It is not my aim at present or in the future to trace every Bantu community South of the Sahara to one of the original three segments. Such would be an impossible task for one historian or anthropologist to undertake. However, to prove the validity of my argument, I am going to analyse in detail one big region of the continent and trace all the major communities in that region back to the original three Bantu segments. At the same time, I am going to point out cousins of the segments so analysed in the particular region who live in the other parts of the continent. It is my hope that once the existence of the original three segments is appreciated and once their original main characteristics are known, the historians and anthropologists in the remaining regions can also trace the communities in those regions back to the original three with reasonable ease.

By the time the original three Bantu segments started to migrate from North-East Africa in large numbers, they had already been converted to Christianity. This very much helps us to date the time the migration started. Although this Christianity was bastardized over the centuries, elements of it are still alive and are still easily distinguished all over Bantu Africa to this day.

One remarkable feature of Negro history is its very slow rate of increase and equally slow rate of territorial expansion after the initial birth or creation. There is archaeological evidence that the Negro was already in existence in the Nile Valley by the year 5 000 B.C. Yet up to 600 A.D. Africa was by no means a Negro continent. Equally remarkable is the sudden explosion of this race after 600 A.D. By the year 1 000 A.D., the continent of Africa had become a Negro continent and at the same time a Bantu continent. This is indeed striking and must be accounted for by a very drastic and revolutionary event somewhere in north-east Africa. That event can only be the Moslem revolution after the death of Mohammed.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE BIRTH OF THE BANTU RACE

The human race did not drop from the sky; it was born. Likewise the Bantu race did not drop from the sky. This being the case, it is necessary to make references to the races in the geographical area under discussion and from whom the Bantu race is likely to have descended. I must admit here that I am in the realm of pure speculation.

The relevant geographical area is North-East Africa. To be more specific, it is the Nile Valley, with particular reference to Egypt and what is today the Republic of the Sudan. I do not think that there is any doubt that this is the cradle of the Bantu race, just as it is the cradle of all Africans, black and brown, short and tall. Nor is there any doubt that, historically and culturally, Ancient Sudan, just south of Egypt, which was called Nubia, Azania or Kush, was an off-shoot of Egypt. Therefore, any references to Nubia or Azania or Kush must necessarily be an indirect reference to Ancient Egypt. The ancestors of the Egyptians were undoubtedly the ancestors of the Nubians or Ancient Azanians or Kushites. It was the Kushites who gave birth to the Bantu race and therefore reference must be made to the races that existed in this region before the birth of the Bantu race itself. The Bantu could not have descended from any races other than those that existed in north-east Africa, from which area they migrated to the rest of the continent.

One race of people that certainly existed in Egypt north of the first Nile cataract is that of a people with a white morphology who established the ancient Egyptian civilization in the Nile Valley. Some scholars call them the Hamites or the Hamitic race. Others are now of the view that they should not be called the Hamites and even go further to suggest that the word Hamite should be withdrawn from usage altogether. For our purposes here, what is important is not what we should call them. What matters is the existence of a race in Egypt and with a white morphology.

Where these people came from nobody seems to know and possibly we will never know. It is possible that they came from the Near East or from Asia. Archaeologists are more of the impression that the whole human race might have started in North-East Africa. If so, it might be that the Hamites (or whatever individual scholars choose to call them) were the descendants of the first human beings to be created.

That there was a people in Egypt — and with a reasonably light skin — by the year 10 000 B.C., and that ancient Egyptian civilization was well under way by the year 3 000 B.C., are historical facts. Whether this civilization developed independently or as a result of foreign influences is not clear and might never be known. But that there was no comparable civilization anywhere in Africa contemporaneous with this Egyptian civilization is indisputable.

A further virtual certainty is that these ancient Egyptians were in contact with people of Jewish origin. Here again, whether it was the ancient Egyptians who culturally were an off-shoot of the Jews or vice versa, might never be established. What is important is that these Hamitic people ended up with common cultural traits with the people of Jewish origin. The Negro, through these Hamites, acquired elements of Jewish culture such as religion. Indeed, similarities between Jewish religion and the religion of some, if not all, Bantu communities all over Africa are remarkable. This was the most prominent feature that first struck me when I started my work on the Shona of Zimbabwe. But from the southern tip of the continent, we hear exactly the same story from the Xosa, who, as I am going to show in this work, were the vanguard of the Bantu migrants from the north-east:

"There are, however, one or two things the consideration of which incline to the belief that the tribe (Xosa) is of East African origin. The first and most important of these is a certain similarity between some religious observances of the Xosas and those of the Jews, which cannot be set aside as mere coincidences." (1)

The writer is himself Xosa working on his own tribe and I am Shona, studying my own tribe. But the two tribes are more than a thousand miles apart and, as we shall discover later, parted company more than a thousand years ago. Yet Jewish religious elements are clearly evident in both. This is far from mere coincidence.

From Nigeria to West Africa, again thousands of miles away, we hear the following:— "The Yoruba people of Ife and its neighbourhood, a Negro people, say that their ancestors came from the east; and Biobaku has even felt able to suggest that the Yoruba must have migrated to their present homes, from a region where they came under ancient Egyptian, Etruscan and Jewish influences." (2) These Yoruba people are today thousands of miles away from the Xosa people of South Africa. Yet Jewish influences can still be detected among them. This cannot be an accident.

Thus a people with a white morphology, whose origins are obscure, existed in Egypt at least ten thousand years ago and fathered the ancient Egyptian civilization. These people had associations with the Jewish community. Because Egyptian history is well documented, it has been clearly established that a people existed in Egypt about ten thousand years ago; the name we give to these people is not really material.

The next race of people we need to consider is a race of dark-skinned, short people with high cheekbones. Some authorities choose to call it the Boskopoid race. These might be the people we today call the San or the Bushmen; it might be the Pygmies; it might even be the ancestors of both the Bushmen and the Pygmies. We cannot legitimately argue that these two were originally not related.

By considering them after the Hamites, I am in no way implying that they came to Africa or were created in Africa after the Hamites; indeed, all indications are that they had always been associated with Africa and they could even have been the first race of people ever to appear on the continent of Africa. I have done so for the reason that their civilization was not as dominant and as influential as that of the Hamites. The reader should not forget that my main concern is with the emergence of the Negro race. It will be plain shortly that the Negro are culturally, if not genetically as well, products of the Hamites and the Boskopoid race.

Whilst the Hamites were confined for thousands of years to the north-eastern corner of Africa, the Bushmen spread to every corner of the continent. They can legitimately claim to be the original indigenous inhabitants of Africa, for they are truly African. One important element of their culture — rock-painting — survives to this day. So far, there has been no other African community that has been known to indulge in rock-paintings. This is why all the rock-paintings in Africa are referred to as Bushmen paintings. The ubiquity of these paintings leaves us in no doubt that people of Boskopoid origins have at one time or other lived in almost every part of the continent. They have even been found in the heart of the Sahara desert. Indications are that they were made before the desiccation of the belt. It is possible that by the beginning of the Christian era, the Bushmen were already everywhere in Africa. Only archaeology can provide positive proof of this.

It is not clear whether they originated in one centre of the continent and then spread to all other parts. If so, was this in the southern tip, north-eastern or north-western corner, or in the Congo region? This is all of purely academic interest. What is significant here is that by the time the Negro race emerged, the Bushmen race was ubiquitous in Africa.

However, as the Hamitic race in Egypt grew in numbers and strength, it spread its tentacles gradually up the Nile Valley. Because these Hamites were physically stronger, and because they managed to develop a superior civilization to that of the Bushmen, they were inevitably militarily stronger. As they expanded up the Nile Valley, they came within reach of the Bushmen, who retreated further south and west.

There is evidence of the existence in Africa of these Boskopoid people nearly five thousand years ago. The best evidence might well be a letter written by Pharaoh Mernere, a sixth dynasty King. The sixth Egyptian dynasty started in about 2423 B.C. and came to an end around 2242 B.C. The Pharaohs of this dynasty embarked on a scheme of extending Egyptian power beyond the first cataract up the Nile Valley. Mernere made Harkhuf the governor of the region south of the first cataract. This governor made expeditions up the Valley and in a westerly direction and brought back quantities of items highly valued by the Pharaohs, including ebony, ivory and frankincense. On one of these expeditions, he captured a dwarf. The Pharaoh gave the following instruction to Harkhuf after learning of the capture:

"Come northward to the court immediately. Thou shalt bring this dwarf with thee, which thou bringest living, prosperous and healthy from the land of spirits, for the dances of the god, to rejoice and gladden the heart of the King of upper and lower Egypt, Neferkere, who lives for ever. When he goes down with thee into the vessel (for the return journey) appoint excellent people who shall sleep beside him on each side of the vessel; take care lest he falls into the water. When he sleeps at night appoint excellent people who shall sleep beside him in the tent; inspect ten times a night. My majesty desires to see this dwarf more than the gifts of Sinai and Punt." (3)

It is clear that the Pharaoh was very much excited by the capture of this little fellow. This in itself suggests that these small people were a rare commodity within the neighbourhood of the Egyptian dominion. But what is really of interest to us is the existence, the presence in Africa, of a race other than the Hamitic race which was confined to the lower Nile Valley, as early as 3 000 B.C. We have no reason to doubt that these short people were a feature of Africa thousands of years before the writing of the letter quoted above. These and the Hamites, who were lighter in complexion and bigger in stature, appear among the indigenous peoples of Africa. They belonged to two different races.

Herodotus, the Greek historian, relates the story of young Nasamonian adventurers who wagered with their friends that they could cross the Sahara from north to south:

"While they were doing so, they were attacked by some little men — of less than middle height — who seized them and carried them off. The speech of these dwarfs was unintelligible; nor could they understand the Nasamonians. They took their captives through a vast tract of marshy country and beyond it came to a town, all the inhabitants of which were of the same small stature, and all black. A great river with crocodiles in it flowed past the town from west to east." (4)

Here indeed is evidence of the presence of Bushmen or Pygmies in West Africa between 500 and 400 B.C. But, significantly, there is no word about the presence of the Negroes or Bantu yet in that sector. This remained virtually the position for about another millenium, as we are going to discover.

The area we are now entering is one of the greatest speculation which, nevertheless, holds great possibilities: That of the birth of the Negro. Here, we cannot avoid embarking on what I can call historical mathematics or ethnographic equations. Some people would immediately ask, what is the difference between Negro and Bantu? Are we not splitting hairs here? This work is a book on the Bantu. I am discussing all the others to determine at what point the Bantu appeared on the scene. Whilst we are not sure of the exact origin of the Negro, by the time we arrive at the birth of the Bantu, we will largely have descended from the realm of legend to that of historical fact.

There is no difference between the Negro and the Bantu, in so far as both originated in the same north-eastern corner of Africa and in as far as their

original ancestry is the same. But the Negroes might be no less than four or five thousand years older than the Bantu. Even more important, the cultural environment in which the Bantu were born had changed radically from that in which the Negro had been born four or five thousand years earlier. The term Bantu itself has no ethnic connotations, since language is an aspect of culture. I must however grant that the people who fathered the ancient civilization of Egypt are the immediate (in relative terms) progenitors of the Negro and at the same time are the distant progenitors of the Bantu.

Let us for the moment concentrate on the possible origins of the Negro. We have established that the fathers of ancient Egyptian civilization were already in existence in the Nile Valley north of the first cataract by the year 5 000 B.C. They could of course have been already there by the year 10 000 B.C. We have also established that a people with a small stature, and whom for convenience we can call Pygmy or Bushman, also existed in Africa by the year 5 000 B.C. They too could have been in the continent by the year 10 000 B.C. We now need to establish that the Negro is a feature of great antiquity in Africa and that he was also a feature of the Nile Valley.

That the Negro was a feature of Africa long before the Christian Era, no-one seems to dispute. Archaeologists have dug up a fossilized Negro skull belonging to the Middle Stone Age near Khartoum; they have dug up another at Asselar, north-east of Timbuktu in West Africa; in 1958, a French explorer called Henri Lhote brought to light remarkable evidence of Negro occupation of part of the Sahara — especially in the form of paintings and engravings. About this, one authority writes: "Here was human history on a grand scale, tier after tier of Saharan styles that told of a bewildering succession of different peoples through uncounted millenia, ranging from marvellously sensitive pictures of animals to no less sensitive portraits of men and women; from scenes of wheeled warfare to scenes of pastoral peace; from gods and goddesses that surely came from ancient Egypt, to masks and figures that as surely did not. Many of them were the work of Negro peoples in a time that was probably not long before or not long after, 4 000 B.C. These people, these Negroes, undoubtedly multiplied in the years after about 5 000 B.C. An analysis of some 800 skulls from dynastic Egypt — from the lower valley of the Nile, that is before about 3 000 B.C., shows that at least a third of them were Negroes or ancestors of the Negroes whom we know; and this may well support the view, to which a study of language also brings some confirmation, that remote ancestors of the Africans of today were an important and perhaps dominant element among populations which fathered the civilization of ancient Egypt." (5)

We hear of Negroes in the Bible long before the Christian Era; we hear of Ethiopians who were a Negro people in the Bible; we hear of Negro slaves also before the Christian Era. All this makes it abundantly clear that the black man was a feature of Africa for thousands of years before the beginning of the first Christian millenium.

The reader should observe that in all the cases quoted above, this Negro is

indicated as a feature of the Nile Valley, or as having associations or previous associations with the Nile Valley. In other words, all the evidence is pointing to Egypt as the original home of the Negro.

We now arrive at three distinct ancient races in Africa, all apparently originating from within the continent. But the study of the birth of the Negro requires mention of a fourth ancient race of Africa. This immediately takes us to what I earlier referred to as "historical mathematics" or "ethnographic equations."

That the Bushmen or Boskopoid people are among the most ancient races of Africa, and that the ancient Egyptian Hamites who fathered the ancient civilization of Egypt are also one of the most ancient races of Africa is established. What appears to have happened is that the Hamite mingled with the Bushmen to give birth to the Hottentot; the Hamite next mingled with the Hottentot to give birth to the Negro; the Hamite mingled with the Negro to give birth to the Bantu. Stage I can thus be summarized in this way.

Hamite	+	Bushman	=	Hottentot
Hamite	+	Hottentot	=	Negro
Hamite	+	Negro	=	Bantu

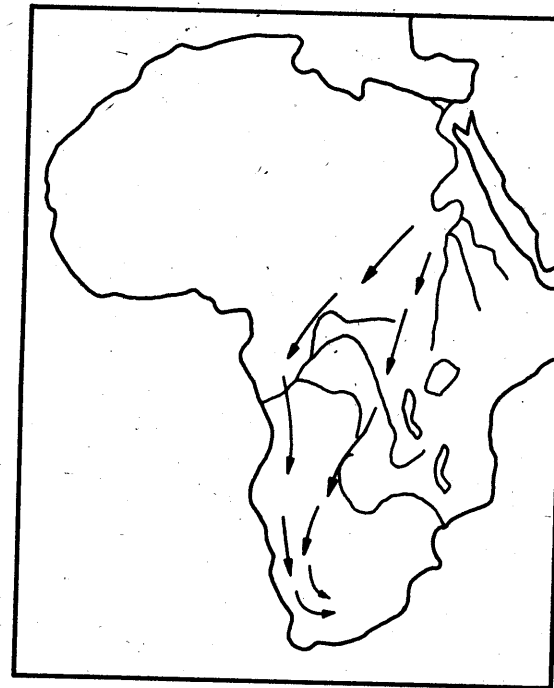
We cannot avoid speculation of this nature. The Hottentots are known to be a younger race than the Bushmen. Even our Southern African history tells us that the Bushmen were the vanguard of the migrations from the north to the south and were followed by the pastoral Hottentots. In fact, the Hottentots were driving the Bushmen to the south. In addition, Bushmen features are prominent in the Hottentots. Their high cheekbones and big hips are a Bushman feature. At the same time, their orange-reddish complexion must have been inherited from a people with a white morphology and these can only be the Hamites. More than this, they are taller than the Bushmen but shorter than the Hamites. All this suggests that the Hottentots are a cross-breed between the Hamites and the Bushmen.

The Negro combines the Hamitic and Hottentot features. His nose is flat, his face is roundish and in many cases cheek-bones are high; these are reminiscent of Hottentot and Bushmen features. But he is taller than the Hottentot and at the same time shorter than the Hamite; his hips do not bulge to the extent of those of the Hottentot or Bushmen yet they are generally bigger than those of the Hamite. Some of them certainly have longish faces and prominent nose bridges that remind us of the features of the Hamites. This suggests a cross-breed between Hamites and Hottentots.

The Bantu is a further compromise between the Hamite on one side and the Hottentots and Bushmen on the other. It would, for instance, not be correct to say that the Bantu have flat noses and round faces with high cheekbones (brachycephalic) or that they have long faces with prominent nose bridges (dolichocephalic) or that they have big hips or small hips or that they are black or brown. This is typical of a third or fourth degree highbreed and this is what the Bantu appear to be.

Map 1

APPROXIMATE COURSE FOLLOWED BY THE HOTTENTOTS



The ethnographic equations above only apply to the original Hottentots, Negro and Bantu. At this stage, I would refer to them as first degree highbreeds. But as centuries passed, further interbreeding no doubt took place to produce second degree, third degree, fourth degree highbreeds. We have no reason to doubt why combinations such as the following should not have taken place:

Hamite	+	Bushman	+	Hottentot	=	African
Hamite	+	Negro	+	Bushman	=	African
Negro	+	Bushman	+	Hottentot	=	African

We would not be honest to ourselves if, genetically, we looked upon ourselves as "pure Negroes" or "pure Bantu" or pure anything for that matter. For instance, new complexities continued to be formed in South Africa as recently as the 19th century such as between the Bantu and the Hottentots; between the Hottentots and the Dutch; between the Bushmen and the Hottentots; between the Bantu and the Dutch; between the Coloureds and the Bantu and between the Hottentots and the Coloureds. As I am going to show later in this book, we have innumerable communities described as Bantu or African today who descended from the Arab traders of the first Christian millenium; we also have new African tribes that descended from the Portuguese after 1 500 A.D. All these people have mingled and continue to mingle with Negroes or Bantu of various degrees to create Africans of the greatest degree of genetic complexity.

All these developments we should be aware of and accept, as a necessary and meaningful prelude to a study of the birth of the Bantu; the locality of their birth, their lines of migration from that locality, and their identification today.

CHAPTER 2

THE BANTU UP TO ABOUT 600 A.D.

Despite my ethnographic equations, it is necessary to define precisely what is meant by the term Bantu. To leave it at the level suggested in the previous chapter would be extremely misleading. Likewise, it is necessary to say more about the term Negro. The ethnographic equations might have created a completely compartmentalized picture of the Bantu and Negro in the minds of some readers. Such would be misleading. There is essentially nothing watertight about these terms. The people we today call Bantu are Negro.

We noted that the Negro was a component part of the ancient Egyptians in the lower Nile Valley; we also noted that the Bantu were a feature of the same Nile Valley and were an offshoot of the Negro. In this chapter, I am going to produce more evidence to prove that the people we call Bantu definitely came from the Nile Valley and were descended from or were an offshoot of the same ancient Hamites who fathered ancient Egyptian civilization. If this is so, why then do we split hairs and talk of Negroes on the one hand and Bantu on the other?

The answer to this is provided by geography and not by ethnic origins. Very shortly, I shall describe the expansion of Egypt up the Nile Valley to incorporate parts of the present day Sudan Republic. I am also going to talk about the conflicts that took place in the lower Nile Valley. Partly as a result of this Egyptian expansion, but largely as a result of the conflicts, some of the black men who appear to have been largely confined to the Egyptian south trekked away from the Nile Valley towards the south, south-west and west. It is very likely that these were some of the people whose culture Henri Lhote talked about in the heart of the Sahara desert. That culture, he added, could be as old as 4 000 years and was closely associated with the civilization of Egypt. This took place before the desiccation of the Sahara.

These people who migrated away from the Nile Valley could have been black; they could have been Hamitic; but they could also have been mixed. As they drifted further away from the Nile Valley, they no doubt mingled more with the Bushmen whom we have discovered to have been everywhere in Africa but were moving further and further away from the areas within the reach of the taller and stronger Hamites and Negroes in the Nile Valley. Inevitably, the complexion, height and features of these migrants changed as more and more of this inter-breeding took place. These are the people we call the "true Negroes" today. That the majority of them should be in West Africa is not so surprising. Those of them who trekked from the Nile Valley towards the south-west must have ended up in West Africa; those that drifted to the west and whose culture Henri Lhote has unearthed in the Sahara must too have drifted to West Africa with the desiccation of the Sahara. Evidence will be produced to show that the black people we call Bantu did not leave the Nile Valley before

600 A.D. In other words, if the black people we call "true Negroes" had remained in the Nile Valley up to about this date, they too would be Bantu and there would be no "true Negro" about them.

Let us now turn to those black people who are termed Bantu. Historians and anthropologists know very well that this term has no ethnic connotations whatever. They know that it is a linguistic term applied to African communities that speak related languages — related in the sense that their languages have many elements in common and might originally have been one language. The term was first applied to us by the philologist, Doctor Bleek, before the turn of the 19th century. He did so because he had been impressed by the common elements within the languages spoken by African communities south of the Sahara and especially the recurrence of the root "Ntu" such as in "Muntu" or "Chintu" (thing) or "Abantu" (people). This means that anybody who was, around 600 A.D., in the geographical region in which this group of related languages was spoken is, by this definition, Bantu regardless of his ethnic origins. Fortunately, we now know the geographical area in which this group of languages was spoken and we know too when the people who spoke it started to migrate to other regions of Africa and in that way helped to spread the related languages. The black people referred to as the "true Negroes" had long left the region before the related group of languages had been developed and therefore never became "Bantu" and cannot be called Bantu. By virtue of this, both the Bantu and the "true Negroes" are Negro but the true Negroes are not Bantu.

It should be very clear from this that we can in no way say that the Bantu emerged in Africa in 1 000 B.C. or 100 A.D. This would imply that their related group of languages developed in 1 000 B.C. or 100 A.D., which is impossible. There are many factors that can influence the development of a language. One of them could be the intrusion of a new group, speaking a different language, into the community; one can be trading links with a people who speak a different language; a third factor could be advances in cultural development inspired from within the community. It could be all three factors combined. No language remains totally static; but significant events and the passage of time are necessary for a language to change radically.

Because the term Bantu is purely linguistic, it is not possible to say precisely when the Bantu language group might have come into existence. However, because the Bantu people were a product of Kush as we are going to discover, the answer is most likely to be that the emergence of Kush also meant the emergence of the Bantu language group. In other words, the birth of Kush also meant the beginning of the birth of the Bantu in the sense that it marked the beginning of Kushitic culture, which developed the culture from which the black people inherited their languages which defined them as Bantu.

DRIFT UP THE NILE VALLEY

Probably the most striking aspect of Hamite and Negro history in the Nile Valley is the very slow population increase of these people. This goes hand in hand with the very slow progress these people made up the Nile Valley towards East Africa and the regions to the east and west of the Upper Nile Valley, and must be for the reason that they took thousands and not hundreds of years to occupy these regions.

We have discovered that by the year 5 000 B.C., the Bushman, the Hamite and the Negro were already features of Africa. By the year 1 000 B.C., it looks as if the Bushmen had already spread to all corners of Africa. Yet, as I am going to demonstrate in the next chapter, by the year 600 A.D., there was still no Bantu Africa, that is to say that the people we call Bantu were still confined to the Nile Valley and its immediate periphery. Admittedly, groups of black people had hived off and were already heading for other parts of Africa such as West Africa and, as we may remember, these are the people we called the Negroes. Yet it still remains historically true that by the year 600 A.D., there is no Negro or Bantu Africa in the sense that neither the "true Negroes" nor the Bantu had occupied even half the continent of Africa. This was very slow progress indeed and there must be factors to explain it.

One of the most important of these factors, as suggested above, must be that these Hamites and Negroes in the Nile Valley multiplied very slowly. The institution of polygamy was undoubtedly practised, because by the time the Bantu Explosion (the sudden large scale migrations of the Bantu people) took place soon after 600 A.D., it was normal practice and remained so up to the colonial period. We can therefore not argue that these people multiplied very slowly because they practised monogamy.

One reason could be that they were decimated by diseases. No doubt they had traditional methods of curing diseases but these might not have been effective enough. The result could have been that many children died in infancy and many adults died before they reached old age. Such a prospect would undoubtedly limit the expansion of the population.

These Hamites and Negroes are known to have been agriculturalists. This is borne out by the record of ancient Egyptian history and by the fact that the Bantu, who were part of them, were agriculturalists by the time they left the Nile Valley around 600 A.D. But it could be that their methods of agriculture were not sophisticated enough to feed the population beyond a certain limit. Again, the result could have been large-scale deaths of infants and premature deaths of adults from malnutrition.

It is inconceivable that a people should confine themselves to no more than Egypt and the Sudan at the least five thousand years if all was well with them. It is not very logical to argue that they might not have expanded to the outer world because peace reigned in the Nile Valley. Whilst war helps to scatter people and therefore to encourage migrations, territorial expansion is generally

and often caused by geographical and economic factors. Even wars themselves are caused by these factors. Therefore, if peace prevailed in the Upper Nile Valley for over five thousand years, it must mean that the economic factors were adequate to cope with the population in the area for the whole of that period. Yet the population did not grow to the point of explosion. This is a remarkable situation.

I hope I have not given the reader the impression that the Hamites and Negroes in Lower Egypt did not multiply or territorially expand at all. What I have said is that the growth rate of this population was very slow and that its territorial expansion was equally slow. That it grew and gradually occupied more and more territory is a historical fact.

Between 2 400 and 2 200 B.C., during the course of the sixth Egyptian dynasty, we noted the Pharaoh appointing Harkhuf as the lord of the southern Egyptian frontier and stationing him just south of the first cataract. Harkhuf then embarked on expeditions to the south and possibly to the west as well, during one of which he captured a dwarf. These were military and trading, and not imperial, expeditions. But they mark the beginning of what can be called Egyptian imperialism.

It is helpful to attempt here to paint the picture that appears to have been prevailing in Egypt by the beginning of Egyptian civilization around 3 000 B.C. After the mingling of the Hamites, Bushmen and Hottentots that we saw earlier, a Negro people was born. While these Negroes were initially part of the Egyptian community, the majority of them appear to have drifted further south up the Nile Valley in the course of time. It therefore looks as if, by the year 2 000 B.C., Egypt proper, i.e. north of the first cataract, was largely Hamitic whilst the regions south of the first cataract, called Nubia, was largely Negro.

To the Egyptians, the word "nub" meant gold and "Nubia" meant the land of gold. As Egyptian power extended up the Nile Valley beyond the first cataract, the Nubians, who were largely Negro, were pushed further to the south. In this southern region of the Nile Valley, they were to create chiefdoms or kingdoms of their own but drew much of their civilization from Upper Egypt, remaining for a long time appendages of Egypt. One of them was Kush; the second was Axum; the third was Punt. Kush is what we may call the Sudan today; Axum may be called the ancestor state of Ethiopia; and Punt consisted of parts of what is the Somali Republic today. The discoveries of scholars such as Henri Lhote, who has been mentioned earlier, leave us in no doubt that these offshoots of the early Egyptians also migrated in a westerly direction from the Nile Valley. But this was the period when the Sahara region was drying up fast and therefore they could not remain there permanently. Some of them, I suggested earlier, must have drifted towards West Africa to become the ancestors of the people referred to as the "true Negroes". No doubt, others drifted towards the north African coast and must be among the people we today call the Berbers. These latter are really not of great interest to us here since, they are outside the "Bantu Sector" of Africa.

Therefore, some territorial expansion took place from Egypt before the great Bantu migrations of the period after 600 A.D. But my argument is that this early Egyptian expansion did not create "Bantu Africa"; this Bantu Africa was created by the great migrations of the period from about 600 A.D. However, for the moment, let us see if there is any evidence of Egyptian expansion and trace that expansion briefly. It is this that is going to lead us to the home of the people we today know as Bantu. In addition, it is going to lead us to the factors accounting for the great Bantu migrations that resulted in the emergence of Bantu Africa.

Above I quoted the instructions of the Pharaoh to Harkhuf in regard to the dwarf he had captured. He said "My majesty desires to see this dwarf more than the gift of Sinai and Punt." This clearly depicts Egypt as already a trading monarchy — trading with Sinai and Punt. What is of interest is that Punt was already in existence during the course of the sixth Egyptian dynasty and was a black kingdom which had much in common with Egypt.

However, it looks as if Egypt did not establish a firm hold on the regions south of the first cataract until after the eleventh Egyptian dynasty, after 2 000 B.C. This was initiated by Amenemhet II who was the second Pharaoh of the twelfth dynasty. These Pharaohs of the twelfth dynasty extended Egyptian power to the second cataract and marked the new southern frontier of the Egyptian kingdom. However, not much progress was made thereafter, the intervention of the Hyksos about 1 700 B.C., being one of the factors.

The further expansion of Egypt was resumed by Tutmosis I, the third Pharaoh of the eighteenth dynasty. He extended Egyptian power to the south and reached the fourth cataract, establishing a new boundary at Kergus beyond the fourth cataract, in the heart of the present-day Sudan Republic. This was the region that was to develop into the Kingdom of Kush which is of particular significance. Further, Egypt continued to trade with Punt. This was done along the Red Sea. One such journey was organized by Queen Hatshepsut. The Egyptian traders met the chief of the Puntites who was called Perehu. They described his wife as "remarkable for dark-skinned generosity of girth and limb." There is thus no doubt that the Puntites were dark-skinned, or black, people. However, after Rameses II of the nineteenth dynasty, Egypt started to decline and completely lost control of the outer provinces. We shall observe some of these provinces, in particular Kush, attacking Egypt and actually conquering it. It is from this turmoil that Bantu Africa would emerge.

TURMOIL IN THE NILE VALLEY

I have no doubt in my mind that Bantu Africa was the child of Kush. No scholar seems to be in any doubt that Kush was to Africa what Egypt was to Kush herself. As one such scholar put it, "This civilization (of Kush) was crucially important not only to the social evolution of the Sudan itself, but also to the growth and spread of civilizing ideas and technologies throughout much of continental Africa to the west and south." (5) This is exactly the argument that I am making here. Before we go further however, we need to look at the history of Kush briefly.

The kingdom of Kush started off as a province — the southern-most province of Egypt. It was Egyptian in almost every respect. It even worshipped the Egyptian sun-god, Amun. Its emergence was simply a result of the imperialistic expansion of Egypt to the south. Like Egypt, Kush did not emerge from nothing to a kingdom of significance in one year; it is not possible to say precisely when it started. It began to feature prominently in records when it had already become a threat to Egyptian power. By 800 B.C., Kush was already such a threat. This might mean that by the year 1 000 B.C. Kush was already in existence as the southern Egyptian frontier province.

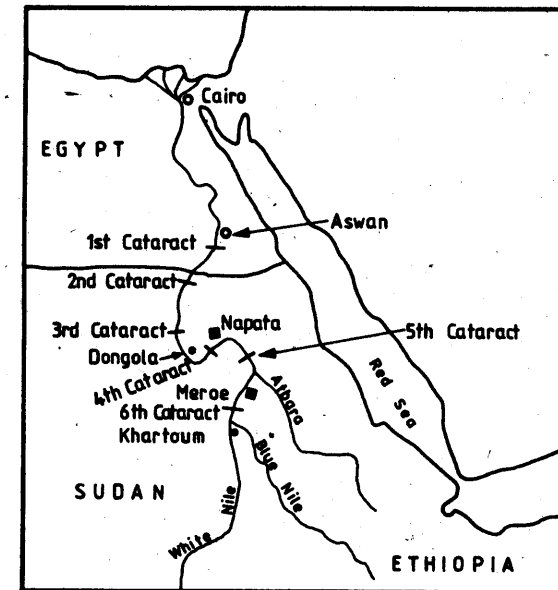
The early capital of Kush was Napata. This town became a famous centre for the worship of the Egyptian sun-god, Amun, whose symbol was the ram. All this is important for it is relevant to the Bantu, as we shall see. Soon after 800 B.C., Kush under its famous King, Kashta, embarked on the conquest of Egypt, the parent-state. This conquest was completed around 725 B.C. by Piankhy, the son of Kashta. As a result of these conquests, Kushite power extended to the borders of Ethiopia and maybe beyond.

In the year 666 B.C. the Assyrians invaded Egypt and drove the Kushites to the south. Largely as a result of this pressure, the Kushite Kings transferred their capital from Napata to Meroe. But the Assyrians could not have failed to inject into Egyptian and Kushitic culture elements of their own. Indeed Egypt and the Nile Valley appear to have been a big confluence of many cultures which were to be spread to all Africa later. Meroe became the capital of Kush about the year 500 B.C. It was soon to develop into the most important cultural centre in all the Upper Nile Valley. The culture that was taken to all corners of Africa by the people we today call Bantu, was Meroitic culture. We can go further and say that the Africans who developed into the Bantu were Meroitic Negroes.

It is possible that one of the results of the Assyrian conquest of Egypt was the introduction of iron technology. This is likely to be so because these Assyrians used iron weapons which were not previously known in the Nile Valley. The pyramids constructed in both Egypt and Kush before 400 B.C. show no iron objects in them. By the year 200 B.C. these objects had become common in the area. By 100 B.C. Meroe had become the centre of the iron-smelting industry in the Nile Valley and some scholars have even gone to the extent of describing it as the "Birmingham of Africa". Even after the development of Bantu Africa,

Map 2

ANCIENT EGYPT AND KUSH



there is not one centre that has visible evidence of iron-smelting in the form of slag heaps as old Meroe has to this day. Thus by the beginning of the Christian Era, Kush was fully in the Iron Age. This was shortly to influence the rest of Africa.

"The turmoil in the Nile Valley" refers to the military crises that troubled the area from 100 B.C. to about 640 A.D. Whilst in the development of Meroe were sown the seeds of Bantu Africa, in this turmoil these seeds germinated and started to grow vigorously. Therefore it is very important to draw our attention to these crises for a proper understanding of what followed — the emergence of Bantu Africa.

I am here particularly interested in the crises that took place just before and during the Christian Era up to about 640 A.D. This is because Bantu Africa has Christian origins and therefore the people who become Bantu could not have left Kush and its neighbourhood before Christianity was introduced into the region.

Above, we have had a glimpse of the first of these crises — conflicts between Egypt and her southern province of Kush. About these conflicts, one authority writes, "Clashes were taking place between Egypt and the land of Cush. At one time, Cush actually conquered Egypt and enslaved many of its people. But the main aim appears to have been the desire of Cush to destroy the corruption that had gone rampant in Egypt and which had led to her decline. In 591 B.C., the Egyptian pharaoh, assisted especially by Greek mercenaries armed with iron weapons invaded and sacked Napata, the Cushite capital. The Cushites moved further south and established a new capital at Meroe which as far as the new technology went, became the Birmingham of Africa thereafter. These conflicts no doubt pushed the Cushites further south." (6)

It is shock-waves of this nature that are of interest. The Kushites were "pushed to the south" and it is from such pushes that Bantu Africa emerged. More and greater pushes were to come.

By the beginning of the first Christian century, Kush had started to trouble Egypt again. It does not look as if all that Kush wanted was independence from Egypt. It seems as if she had grown so powerful as to aspire to the domination of Egypt itself. This might be termed Kushite imperialism.

Before the birth of Christ, the Roman Empire started to emerge. Egypt and North Africa were absorbed into this rising new empire. On the southern Egyptian frontier, Augustus established Philae and Elephantine and these virtually marked the boundary line between Egypt and the kingdom of Kush. Roman garrisons were stationed at these southern outposts. But Kush did not leave them in peace, and this shows how powerful and determined the Kushites were. The Kushite troops went on to attack Philae and Elephantine and actually overpowered the three Roman auxiliary detachments that had been stationed there to defend these outposts. The Kushites captured many Roman soldiers. The Roman governor of Egypt then was Petronius. To deal with the

situation developing to the south of Egypt, he had to send down no less than 10 000 infantry troops and 800 cavalry troops to recover the southern outposts from the Kushites. This is a further reflection of Kushite power.

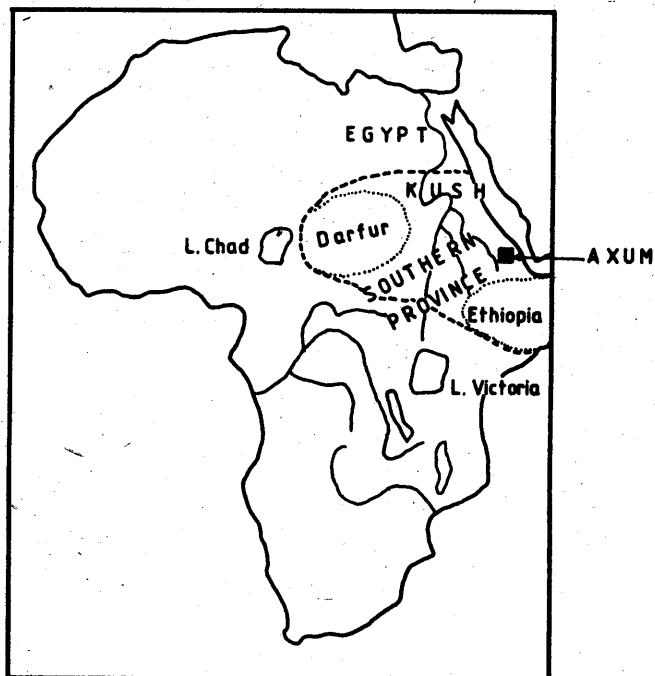
It is significant that conflicts took place in this region and that the Kushites were defeated by the Roman soldiers operating from Egypt; Petronius drove the Kushites to the south through Napata and destroyed that town. The Kushites were pushed further to the south. It is important to realize that this was taking place after the beginning of the Christian Era, and was therefore very close to the beginning of the great Negro migrations that were to create Bantu Africa. Each big military push from any corner had tremors and ripples in the opposite direction. Therefore, it cannot be doubted that this Roman thrust from the north caused shock-waves in Kush and the lands further to the south. At this stage, the question is, 'How far south?'

The next shock-wave was even bigger and takes us to the brink of Bantu Africa. Kush was a trading kingdom after the fashion of Egypt. We have seen Egypt sending boats down the Red Sea and trading with the land of Punt along what is now the Somali coast. Kush also traded with the East African coastal region. This area carried on a lucrative trade with India, Oman and the South Arabian peninsular, where there was a highly developed civilization. The people of this South Arabian peninsular were Arabs — Semites — and not Hamites or Negroes. They crossed the Red Sea and established a new kingdom in what we may call northern Ethiopia; this new Semitic kingdom was called Axum. Because of their sophisticated civilization, these Arabs of Axum created a very powerful kingdom on the African mainland, and this was shortly to have repercussions on the neighbouring Negro peoples of the kingdom of Kush and the Nile Valley in general. This was to mark the real beginning of Bantu Africa.

Sometime between 300 and 350 A.D., these Semitic people of the new kingdom of Axum invaded Kush, defeated the Kushites and destroyed their capital of Meroe. They cut off the Kushite trading routes to the east coast. Kush dwindled to insignificance and her written records reveal little thereafter. The kings and queens of Kush started to be buried in miserable pyramids that were a very poor shadow of those constructed earlier. This is a reflection of the uncertainty and insecurity that prevailed over the kingdom. It was a reflection of the second-rate status of the former mighty kingdom as a result of this conquest by the Arab state of Axum.

We have a good record of these wars between Axum and Kush and the neighbouring Negro peoples. Here is one of them: "With the help of the Lord of Heaven, who in heaven and earth conquers all, Ezana, son of Ella Amida, a member of (the House) Helen, king of Axum and Hemer (Himyar) and of Raydan and of Sab'a and of Salhen and of Tsyamb and of Bega and of Kasu (Kush), king of kings . . . never conquered by an enemy . . . By the power of the Lord of All I made war on Noba (Nubia) . . . I set out by the power of the Lord of the Earth and fought at the Takazi, by the lord of Kemalko . . . I burnt their towns, those with stone houses and those with straw huts; and pillaged

NEGRO POSITION AROUND 350AD AT THE TIME OF THE AXUMITE INVASION



KEY

○ Negro belt around 350AD

their corn and bronze and iron and copper; they (his troops) destroyed the effigies in their houses (temples) and also their stores of corn and cotton and threw them into the river Seda. And I reached the Kasu (Kushites) whom I fought and made captive at the confluence of the rivers Seda and Takazi; and the next day, I sent my troops . . . on a campaign up the Seda to the towns of stone and of straw; the names of the towns of stone are Aleva and Daro. Then I sent troops down the Seda to the four straw villages of the Noba and the King. The stone towns of the Kasu (Kushites) which the Noba took (were) Tabito, Fertoti; and they (his troops) went as far as the Red Noba."

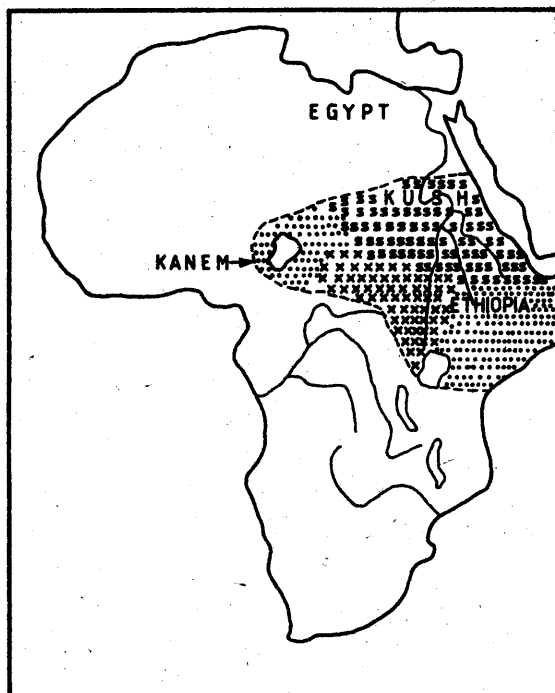
This was a report by Ezana, the Axumite king, of what actually happened during the course of one of the wars between Axum and the Negro peoples of Kush and the neighbourhood. Kush was destroyed and many of her people scattered in different directions. From this, the birth of Bantu Africa took a big leap forward: The Kushite royal dynasty was not captured by these Axumites. Scholars are producing evidence to prove that it ran away in a westerly direction and ended up in the Darfur region. For Africa, the fall of Meroe is certainly very significant, much more so than has been recognised. It would not be an exaggeration to liken it to the effect of the fall of Constantinople on all Europe after 1453. Arkell gives us a glimpse of this, "We can infer from one inscription and from ruins, and from the traditions of various divine kingdoms that stretch all the way across the Atlantic, that after the fall of Meroe, the royal family that had ruled there for more than a thousand years moved west, away from the Nile . . . and sired many another little kingdom where the ruler was divine and the institutions reflected the degenerate Egyptian institutions of Meroe. With them went the knowledge of iron-working across Africa. On that route, Lake Chad is something of a Clapham Junction, and it is probable that, once iron-working was known in that area, it was diffused by more than one route into Africa, south as well as west of Chad." (7)

Indeed, the scattering of neighbours as a result of a war such as that between Axum and Kush and her neighbours is an inevitable consequence of war. We only need to look to the Natal area during the first three decades of the nineteenth century to see what effect the Chaka Revolution had on the region and on southern Africa in general. Those that scattered did not leave their traditions, military and all, behind, but took them with them and were to influence their neighbours elsewhere in Africa. This is the significance of Arkell's words quoted above in respect of the dispersal of the Kushites from the Nile Valley.

Yet whilst the Axumite conquest of Kush and her neighbours between 300 and 350 A.D. affected the course of African history, it did still not create Bantu Africa. Bantu Africa was finally born in the few centuries after 600 A.D. and largely as a result of another crisis in the same Nile Valley. There is no scholar who can legitimately argue that Kush was Christian around 300 A.D. because this is simply not a historical fact. Because Kush and her neighbours were not Christian around 300 A.D., the Kushites who dispersed from the region as a

Map 4

NEGRO POSITION AROUND 639AD JUST BEFORE THE MOSLEM INVASION OF EGYPT



KEY



Areas occupied mainly by Dziva-Hungwe people



Main Matrilineal area (Tonga)



Main Soko region

result of the Axumite conquest could never have been Christian. Yet early Bantu Africa was Christian. This necessarily means that the Negroes who created Bantu Africa left Kush and her neighbourhood after that region had been converted to Christianity. This points to another crisis as the cause of the Negro diaspora that resulted in the emergence of Bantu Africa. This final crisis is the conquest of Egypt and her neighbourhood by the Moslems after the death of the prophet Mohammed. Hardly a century after the death of Mohammed, Bantu Africa was virtually in existence.

Mohammed was born in the year 591 A.D. His life history is well documented. 622 was the year of the Hegira; in 632 he died. His most important doctrine for our purposes was that he who died for Allah, the Arab God, would enter Heaven. As a result of this, the members of the new Moslem religion looked upon themselves as having a special duty, that of conquering non-Moslem regions and converting them to Islam. To phrase it crudely, the followers of Mohammed literally fought to die in order to enter Heaven and there enjoy all that Mohammed had promised. The results of this new Arab spirit are plain; in a matter of one century after the death of their leader, these Moslems had swept across all north Africa and, after conquering Spain, attacked southern France. It was during the course of this sweep that Egypt and her neighbourhood were stormed by these high-spirited members of the new religion and incorporated into the new Arab Moslem Empire. About this, one authority states, "It was in the year 639 A.D. that Muslim Arabs appeared on the eastern borders of Egypt. By 641, Egypt had been wrested from the Byzantines and a treaty was signed whereby it was incorporated in the new Arab Empire. — From Egypt, they (the Arabs) moved westwards in a great sweep of conquest that was to bring them to the Atlantic coast of Morocco and across the sea into Spain, Sicily and even France." (8) As we may remember, they were checked by Charles Martel in southern France at the battle of Tours in the year 732 A.D., exactly a hundred years after the death of Mohammed. In the meantime, other Moslem armies swept in other directions, conquering the whole Middle East and penetrating India and even China.

That the Moslems were a very disruptive force in north-east Africa can be glimpsed from the following words from Davidson, "From the sixth to the fourteenth century Christian Ethiopia disappears from recorded history in a welter of war — war against the Muslims of the north, war against the pagans of the south : and when it emerges once again, it is still engaged in these wars although at last with a hope of respite." This is precisely why I talk of turmoil in north-east Africa, and it is almost a certainty that the turmoil after 600 A.D. was caused more by the Moslems than anybody else.

The regions to the south of Egypt were not left undisturbed by these great Moslem conquests. Precisely how far south of Egypt Moslem Arabs penetrated does not appear to be clear from records. But the Negro peoples in these regions, which included Kush and Ethiopia, scattered to the south and west. They did so after the beginning of these Moslem conquests. Bantu Africa of

Christian origins was almost in existence. By the year 1 000 A.D., all West Africa was under Negro control and these same Negroes were, about the same time, crossing the Limpopo River into South Africa. Here was Bantu Africa in the making.

Earlier, I remarked that it was a startling fact that the Hamites and Negro peoples remained in the Nile Valley for thousands of years and did not spread to the far corners of Africa in those years. I suggested that this was because they multiplied only slowly and speculated on some of the factors that possibly accounted for it. We must now be even more impressed by the very rapid migrations of these same people; only dramatic developments in the Nile Valley can account for them. No doubt the most dramatic of these factors was this Moslem activity in the Horn of Africa. As a result, the Negro peoples whom we today call Bantu covered thousands of miles in only three or four hundred years after the death of Mohammed, to create Bantu Africa. The truth is that whilst the Negro might have been in Africa along the Nile Valley for possible ten or more millenia up to about the year 600 A.D., Bantu Africa was born in the five hundred years after that date.

CHAPTER 3

BANTU MIGRATIONS AFTER 600 A.D.

"... it looks very much as if the ethnic structure of this country (Zimbabwe) seems to be a microcosm of the ethnic structure of Bantu Africa. ... I can extend the statement and say that the ethnic structure of Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique or South Africa is a microcosm of the ethnic structure of the whole of Bantu Africa."

"Around 900 A.D. when the Mbire started to trek from Mbire in Tanganyika towards the Zambézi River, there appear to have been only three Bantu Families, at least in the whole eastern half of the continent from the Lacustrine area to the southern tip of the continent."

"The big questions are, 'Are these three early Bantu tribes features of southern Africa only? Were they originally unrelated before they started the trek southwards? Might it not be that all the central and west African tribes were originally part of these tribes that had emerged by 900 A.D.?'"

"No doubt what I have dared to put on paper here is a challenge. It is a challenge to more than the Shona. It is a challenge to the historians and anthropologists all over the continent of Africa. It is a challenge to the scholars the world over who are interested in what is happening on this continent. If the challenge is taken up, it might mark the beginning of a New History of Africa." The above statements are my own words quoted from the Appendix of "From Mutapa to Rhodes". Hardly twelve months after submitting my manuscript to Macmillan for publication, I started to discover material that goes a long way towards confirming my observations. The purpose of this chapter is to produce this new material and prove the validity of the quotations above. In this respect, it is the most important chapter in this book and the author hopes that it will enable historians and anthropologists in the regions of Africa that are not covered in detail here, to study their communities and fit them into the pattern that will have emerged by the time we reach the end of this chapter.

However, before we discuss the Bantu in detail, let us briefly look at our two African groups again, Negro and Bantu. In spite of my "historical mathematics" or "ethnographic equations", I ultimately defined the Negroes as those black people who migrated away from Kush and its neighbourhood before the region was converted to Christianity. I then went on to define the Bantu as those black people who migrated away from the same region, after it had been converted to Christianity. Let me go further and state in plain terms that the origin of the Negro is also the origin of the Bantu. The term 'Negro' is no more than a reference to the complexion of the African. The term 'Bantu' is no more than a reference to the languages spoken by the same black people, those who left the region of their origin after certain cultural developments had taken place. One of these was certainly in the field of religion; one was language; the other was iron technology. The result was that those who filtered out of the Nile Valley early, either had no iron technology or, if they left after the beginning of the first Christian century, understood merely the rudiments of early iron technology;

they never became Christian; their language was different because the Kushitic language had not yet developed to what it was around 600 A.D. Because the main distinguishing factor, by convention, between the Negroes and the Bantu is language, we cannot ignore these developments in Kushitic culture in the centuries before the great Bantu migration which we can term "The Bantu Explosion."

What I am saying is that African migrations away from the Nile Valley did take place before the advent of Christianity in the Valley, as a result of the factors we have considered above — mainly those I referred to as crises; that it should not be surprising if archaeologists found evidence of Negro occupation of isolated sites in parts of Africa outside the Nile Valley before 300 A.D. or even before 100 A.D.; that such sites would represent the occupation of the areas by the Africans whom we are here calling the Negroes; that these isolated pockets of Negro peoples did not go far enough both in the direction of West Africa and Southern Africa, nor were they dense enough, to enable us to talk of "the continent of Negro Africa" by the year 400 A.D.

When the "Bantu Explosion" started soon after the death of Mohammed, the black people we describe as Negro were propelled far into West Africa and southern Africa by the Bantu migrants from Kush and her neighbourhood. Many of them must have been absorbed by the new, culturally advanced and militarily and numerically stronger African migrants we call Bantu. These are likely to have lost their identity altogether. Others, especially in West Africa, managed to maintain threads of their pre-Bantu culture and even appearance. These are the people identified by the anthropologists in West Africa as "the true Negroes." From an ethnic point of view therefore, there is essentially no difference between these two groups. From cultural linguistic points of view, there is a difference. To repeat, the Bantu are Negroes but the "true Negroes" are not Bantu since the term Bantu implies a particular culture of which of course, language is an aspect. The fact that the black people termed "true Negroes" are such a small minority in Africa south of the Sahara today suggests that the numbers of the Negroes who filtered out of the Nile Valley before the great Bantu Explosion of the period after 600 A.D. were small. This seems to confirm my earlier argument that the original Hamites and Negroes multiplied rather slowly.

It has been necessary to cast our eyes at the "Negroes" and Bantu immediately before coming to the great Bantu migration to set the stage for a consideration of these migrations. Some may ask, "What became the fate of the Negroes after the Bantu Explosion? Why is it that we do not seem to have "true Negroes" in southern Africa?" I hope I have clarified the position with regard to these related questions.

What was the structure of the Bantu at the point of the Great Explosion? This is a crucial question and our ability to clarify the origins of the Bantu and their

civilization at the point of the Great Explosion depends on its answer. Look again at the first two quotations at the beginning of this chapter. The second one of these makes it clear that there were three Bantu Families in all eastern Africa from the Great East African Lakes to at least the Limpopo around the year 900 A.D. From now onwards, I shall call these three, Great African Families 'The Great Bantu Families'. Indeed there is now evidence to prove that all Bantu Africa is populated by no more than segments of these three Great Bantu Families. This chapter is intended to produce that evidence.

The third quotation at the start of this chapter asks, "Are these three early Bantu tribes features of southern Africa only? Were they originally unrelated before they started the trek southwards?" Here again, evidence to hand makes it clear that the three Great Bantu Tribes descended from a common ancestor either in the present day Sudan Republic or in Egypt. Considering that the three tribes migrated from the same corner of Africa and the great similarities in culture between the present day Bantu communities all over Africa, this conclusion should not come as a surprise. The Bantu people all over Africa point to the north-east as their original home. As most of these Bantu people left this home at least a thousand years ago, we cannot ignore these claims. In any case, these claims are strongly supported by common cultural traits which have survived everywhere to this day. The problem facing the historian and anthropologist has not been that they have not recognised these common elements or that they did not think that these people might have come originally from north-east Africa. It has simply been that they did not have outright evidence to formulate a definite conclusion.

That all Eastern Africa, from the Great Lakes to at least the Limpopo, was occupied by members of three Bantu Families around the year 1 000 A.D. is indisputable. That all Africa south of the Zambezi River is today occupied only by segments of these three Great Families is indisputable too. I would go so far as to state categorically that the the multiplicity of Bantu communities — so-called tribes — in Africa south of the Zambezi can still all be traced to the original three Great Bantu Tribes. That segments of these three Great Families are identifiable in West Africa thousands of miles away and more than a thousand years after parting with their cousins in southern Africa, is also beyond doubt. To prove the validity of these statements is the major exercise of this chapter.

Let us now proceed to the identification of the three Great Bantu Families or Tribes. The first of them to cross the Zambezi River and to settle in Zimbabwe was the Dziva/Hungwe Tribe which identified itself with water and aquatic animals and plants. "Dziva" means "pool" in Shona; "Hungwe" means the fish eagle which also identifies itself with water. Because members of the tribe associated themselves with water and aquatic animals and plants, they were referred to as "The Masters of the Water" during the early days.

The second one of these Great Bantu Families to leave the area of the Great East-African Lakes was the Tonga Family. By 900 A.D. members of this tribe occupied the larger part of eastern Zambia and the region to the west of Lake

Malawi. It is possible that it was they who had pushed the Dziva/Hungwe Tribe across the Zambezi River. This tribe was unique in that it was matrilineal. The other two were patrilineal. The main distinguishing feature of the Tonga Family was therefore MATRILINY.

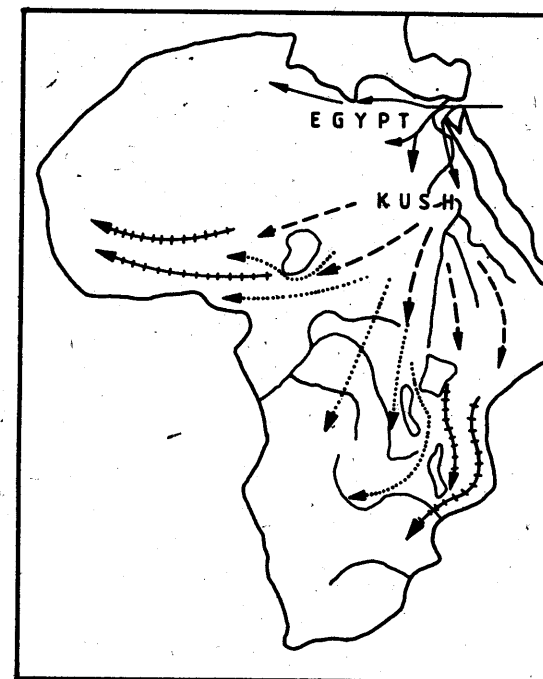
The third of the Great Bantu Tribes to leave the area of the East African Great Lakes was the Soko Family. The segment of this Family that trekked to southern Africa had descended from Ma-mbiri and for this reason, it was referred to as the MBIRE TRIBE. For the same reason, it called the district that it occupied in Tanganyika, MBIRE. Its distinguishing feature was "association with land and land animals." For this reason, all its members were referred to as "The Masters of the Land" or "The Masters of the Soil." Because the Dziva-Hungwe Family associated itself with water, its members tabooed fish and did not eat it; they were mainly hunters and farmers. Because the Soko Family was associated with land, members of this Family tabooed land animals and ate fish. For this reason, they were mainly a fisher-folk, closely associated with rivers and river valleys. To enable them to hunt, they associated themselves with the baboon and monkey and to this day, they hold these animals to be sacred. Any other animal, they hunted and killed, but they were essentially a fisher-folk initially.

Our original three Great Bantu Tribes therefore consisted of the Dziva-Hungwe Family which was associated with water and which held the fish to be a sacred animal and for that reason avoided fishing; the Tonga Family which was Matrilineal; the Soko Family which associated itself with land and land animals and was mainly a fisher-folk. This order is important for it was exactly in this same order that these Great Tribes came from the north to the south. It also looks very much as if this is the same order in which segments of these Great Families occupied West Africa.

To this day, all of southern Africa is populated by segments of these three Great Families. However, as I am going to show, two communities of foreign origins were created in southern Africa as a result of the intrusion of foreign elements of non-African origins. But these two new families also have cousins all over Africa, because the foreign elements from which they descended were not only a feature of southern Africa. This is a reference to the descendants of the Arabs or Moors and the Portuguese. This said, we now need to prove that at least one whole region of Africa is populated entirely by segments of the three Great Bantu Tribes above. We will then proceed to analyse briefly the foreign elements amongst them. From there, we will move to West Africa and observe the situation in that region.

Map 5

MOSLEM INVASION OF EGYPT AROUND 640AD AND CONSEQUENCES ON THE BANTU BY 800AD



KEY

- Moslem invasion lines
- Soko desertion lines
-→ Dziva desertion lines
-→ Tonga desertion lines

Each group stormed the one ahead of it and in that way caused an avalanche

THE SHONA : CASE STUDY I

It is my study of the Shona Community of Zimbabwe that enabled me to unearth this history. I saw an interesting pattern among them. One of their most outstanding features is the presence amongst them of three distinct ethnic groups, each easily identifiable. After discovering this, I went on to ask myself whether or not these three distinct ethnic groups were features of this country only. I was excited to discover elements of all three groups in other regions of Africa. The result of that interest and excitement is this book.

The Dziva — Hungwe Family

Those interested in the details of Shona history should read my "From Mutapa to Rhodes, 1 000 A.D. to 1890." Here, I am only going to pick out the main points that are directly relevant. The first Bantu group to occupy this country was the Dziva-Hungwe Family which did so somewhere between 700 and 800 A.D. as mentioned above. These Dziva-Hungwe people associated themselves with water and aquatic animals and plants and still do so today. They descended from a man called Dzivaguru (Great Pool) and his son, Karuva. Whether these two men were still alive by the time their descendants crossed the Zambezi River into this country is not clear. But both Dzivaguru and Karuva operate as the greatest ancestral spirits of the Dziva-Hungwe Family in this country to this day. They have always operated in the Mount Darwin and Zambezi Valley areas of Zimbabwe. That is the first region of Dziva-Hungwe occupation in this country. We cannot say precisely when these people crossed the Zambezi River; we need the assistance of the archaeologists in this matter. But by the year 800 A.D., they certainly seem to have arrived.

The Family then broke into two segments. One segment remained in the Zambezi Valley; in this area also remained the great Dziva-Hungwe ancestral spirits, Dzivaguru and Karuva. The second segment that descended from Saruvimbi or Ruvimbi drifted further to the south along eastern Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Around the year 1 000 A.D. the Family was invaded by a more powerful and highly-structured Bantu group that was to create the Mutapa Empire. The invasion took place across the Zambezi River from the north-eastern corner of the country. The result was that the Dziva-Hungwe segment still in the Mount Darwin and Zambezi Valley region was cornered there and was pushed further upstream. Its southern segment under Saruvimbi was driven further to the south and, in due course, segments of it were pushed across the Limpopo into South Africa and to the west into Botswana. We shall analyse this in greater detail when we come to consider Botswana and South Africa.

Apart from the Dziva-Hungwe segment bottled up in the Zambezi Valley, pockets of the Southern segment under Saruvimbi remained in the southern and south-eastern regions of this country. In other words, the southern segment of this Family was not all driven by the Mutapas into South Africa and Botswana. The distribution of these remaining pockets was determined by the

Mutapa invasion. They became confined to the hot, dry and semi-tsetse ridden areas such as the Limpopo Valley and the Chipinga-Melsetter area. As a result, the northern segment of the Family lost its links with the southern segment completely.

All the members of this Family associated themselves with water and were the "Masters of the Water." For their totem, they selected Dziva (Pool) and for their tribal name, they picked on "Hungwe" (the fish eagle) which is closely associated with water (the pool). This is why I refer to them as the Dziva-Hungwe people. After the invasion of the Mutapas, the southern segment of the Family split into a multiplicity of branches. This marked the large scale segmentation and fragmentation of the Families into branches that were to end up inter-marrying, as if they had not been related before.

In spite of this segmentation and fragmentation, they stuck to their major principle-association with water. To this day, they still associate themselves with water and this is why I was able to identify them. Admittedly, as I showed in "From Mutapa to Rhodes," one or two branches, such as the Mtoko Shumba Nyamuziwa dynasty and its segment, the Makoni Nyati Shonga dynasty, have departed from this principle and picked on land animals for their totems. But at least 90% of the branches of the Dziva-Hungwe Family in this country still associate themselves with water and aquatic animals. Considering that they have been in this country since at least the year 800 A.D. this is indeed remarkable and easily demonstrates the rigidity and tenacity of African traditions and customs.

What happened after the Mutapa invasion was that most members of this Family selected different aquatic animals and plants for their totems. Each branch started to look upon itself as different from the others that had chosen different aquatic animals and plants. This facilitated inter-marriage between them for they started to look upon themselves as alien to each other. One group picked on the Hungwe (fish eagle), for its totem. I may remind the reader that the Hungwe bird is the Zimbabwe Bird which was depicted at Great Zimbabwe by the Mutapas to represent Dziva-Hungwe presence in this country and Dziva-Hungwe precedence over the Mbire Mutapas. In this way, this particular branch started to identify itself with the fish eagle and looked upon it as a sacred animal. To this day, members of this branch still call themselves Hungwe and many of them use this as their surname.

I stated that, originally, the whole Dziva-Hungwe Family did not eat fish because of their association with the Pool, the habitat of the fish. But when this segmentation and fragmentation set in, only those who picked on the fish for their totem tabooed the fish and therefore did not eat it. The other branches started to taboo the aquatic animals and plants they chose for their totems. In this country today, we have a big segment of the Dziva-Hungwe Family whose totem is Hove (fish) and who still taboo the fish because to them, it is a sacred animal. Many members of this branch still use "Hove" for their surname to this day.

The third important segment of the Dziva-Hungwe Family chose to identify itself with the crocodile. They too, hold this reptile to be a sacred animal and do not normally kill or even touch it. Those in Matabeleland and who were Ndebelized call it the Ngwenya or Kwena. They are members of the same Dziva-Hungwe Tribe. Again, many of them use this for their surname to this day. Like all the others, it is a totem and not the name of an ancestor.

The fourth segment retained the original all-encompassing totem, Dziva (Pool). In Matabeleland, they call themselves Siziba which simply means Dziva. The fifth segment chose to identify itself with the hippo. Most members of this segment are in the Chipinga area. Because this region was subjected to Shangaan influences after the 1820s, this segment Shanganized its totem to Mlambo. A branch of this segment which is also in the same area chose to associate itself with reeds (tsanga). Because it too was subjected to Shangaan influences, it Shanganized its totem and became Mhlanga. We have many people in this country who use these names Mlambo and Mhlanga as surnames. They are not names of ancestors but totems.

Because Hungwe is a bird, one segment of the Dziva-Hungwe Tribe chose to call itself simply Shiri (bird). This is a reference to the fish eagle. But branches of this segment went further to identify themselves with other birds, particularly the dove, and hold it to be sacred. This is not associated with water and why they chose it is not clear.

This completes our analysis of the Dziva-Hungwe segments in this country. All these segments together constitute about 10% of the population of this country. Why they are such a small minority when they were the first to occupy the country is easy to explain. They were driven beyond the borders of the country by the Mutapas whom we are going to analyse shortly. In South Africa and Botswana, they constitute no less than 90% of the Bantu population there. This should not surprise us since these were the regions to which they fled after the invasion of the Mutapas around the year 1 000 A.D. For our future purposes, the important point to note is that all the segments of this Family have a special identity-association with water. Thus it would not be out of place today to continue to call them "The Masters of the Water."

THE TONGA FAMILY :

The second of the three Great Bantu Tribes to leave the area of the East African Great-Lakes for the south was the Tonga Family. Most of their members did not cross the Zambezi River into Zimbabwe at all. Here in Zimbabwe, they constitute hardly 2% of the African population. This is so partly because by the time the Mutapa invaders crossed the Zambezi River around 1 000 A.D., only a few pockets of them had already crossed the Zambezi River. Furthermore, as the descendants of the Mutapas spread to the north from the south, they drove many segments of this Tonga Tribe back to the north across the Zambezi River. To this day, the majority of them have been confined to the Zambezi Valley, from near Hwange to Kariba Dam.

Those of them who had crossed the Zambezi River by 1 000 A.D., and were in the north-east, were driven further south along the coast and were to end up along the lower reaches of the Sabi River, largely in present-day Mozambique. In due course, some of them filtered into Zimbabwe through the south-eastern corner and are in the Nuanetsi-Chiredzi area. Although some of them are still called Tonga today, other segments are called Tsonga and Hlengwe in this country. A few of them filtered back into the Bikita area of the Masvingo region.

Right in the centre of the Shona world in the Chegutu area, we find another segment of the Tonga people. These were originally ruled by Ngezi who, after Chimurenga in 1897, lost his chieftainship to Mupawose who is also Tonga. Because this segment is right in the heart of the Shona, it was Shonarized and has become patrilineal.

In the Tonga community, the head of the family was the mother and not the father. When a man married, he moved to the home of his wife. The children did not belong to him but to the wife. If a chief died, the chieftainship was inherited not by his son or brother but by his sister's son. In the early days, it was more common to find women in Tonga society being the rulers than men. Indeed, the Tonga community was a society dominated by women rather than by men. The main distinguishing feature of the Tonga Family was therefore MATRILINY and this is important for our future purposes.

Although these Tongas constitute a very small percentage of the Bantu people in this country, it is important to note their presence. The fact that they are a small minority in Zimbabwe does not mean that they are a small minority elsewhere.

Around 900 A.D., the Tonga Tribe occupied the region between the Zambezi and Lake Tanganyika. By then, the Dziva-Hungwe Tribe was already south of the Zambezi. The Mbire Soko Family, ruled by Nembire, that invaded the Dziva-Hungwe Family is the same tribe that invaded the Tonga who then occupied the area west of Lake Malawi. The Mbire Soko group talks of the Tonga as its rival tribe north of the Zambezi. In "From Mutapa to Rhodes" I produced one of the oldest Mbire Soko traditional tunes that specifically mentions the Tonga and "boasts" that they (the Mbire) were to the Tonga "a lion that devours human beings." These Tonga people were driven to the south towards the Zambezi by the Mbire Soko Family. But they did not cross the river into Zimbabwe and it looks as if the Dziva-Hungwe Family was the barrier to them. Instead, they diverted to the west up the Zambezi River, where the majority of them are still found today in Zambia. I added that the present distribution of the Tonga people was very much determined by this Mbire Soko invasion. The important point to note here is that the Dziva-Hungwe people were the vanguard of the Great Bantu migrations from the north to the south; the Tonga were immediately behind them but largely still north of the Zambezi River; the Mbire Soko were the rearguard further north and behind the Tonga. This sequence is important.

THE MBIRE SOKO FAMILY

Chapter 1 of "From Mutapa to Rhodes" is concerned solely with the Dziva-Hungwe people. The rest of the book is almost entirely on the Mbire Soko Family. This is because about 85% of the people in this country are segments of this Mbire Soko Family. This being the case, it is superfluous to discuss this Family here in great detail. The reader is therefore referred to the above book if he needs greater detail than is provided here on this Tribe.

The Mbire Soko Family was highly structured and geared towards war. Because of this, it found it easy to overwhelm both the Tonga and the Dziva-Hungwe Families on its way from the Great Lakes to the south. Equally, its religious system was also highly structured and through it we have been able to unearth the history of this country and important aspects of the Bantu in general.

Those who read the book alluded to above may remember that the founding ancestor of this Tribe was Murenga from whom our word "Chimurenga" was derived. This man trekked from Kenya just before 900 A.D. and settled with his descendants and followers in Tanganyika just to the east of Lake Tanganyika. The Soko tribe he founded there was called Mbire after the name of Murenga's grandfather who was called Ma-mbiri. As a result of this the district that was occupied by this tribe in Tanganyika was also called Mbire after the same ancestor. This then marked the birth in Africa of the Mbire Soko Tribe which was only a segment of the Great Soko Family that had emerged in Kush.

Because this particular Soko segment descended from Mambiri and because it chose to call both itself and its new district in Tanganyika, Mbire, Murenga its founding ancestor and paramount chief was given the title NEMBIRE which meant "owner or ruler of Mbire." From then on, all the paramount rulers of this tribe both north and south of the Zambezi River were called Nembire. Around 900 A.D., the tribe started to trek out of Tanganyika towards the Zambezi River. It was then under the leadership of Chaminuka, the son of Murenga who inherited the title Nembire. For a time it established itself to the west of Lake Malawi in a region of tall grass and rather few trees which for this reason was called GURUUSWA. It was largely in this area that the tribe conflicted with Tonga people, most of whom it drove to the west up the Zambezi River. These conflicts are enshrined in one of the greatest and oldest Shona war tunes called "Vana VaPfumojena" (the children of Mr. Pfumojena). Pfumojena was the name given to Murenga because he is thought to have possessed a shining silvery spear which he is said to have captured from the Arabs in one of the conflicts between the Mbire Soko and the Arabs somewhere to the north-east of Tanganyika. It was no doubt these conflicts with the Arabs which drove the tribe further south. In turn the Mbire Soko tribe drove away those who were already to the south of it and these were both the Tonga and the Dziva-Hungwe Families. In this way, conflicts with Arabs in the north-east created a virtual avalanche in Africa which resulted in the occupation of the whole continent by segments of the three original Great Bantu Tribes in a matter of three to four hundred years.

It is not clear which of the ancestors of this tribe left Kush for Ethiopia. When the tribe occupied part of Kenya, it claimed that it had come from Ethiopia. It could have been Mambiri himself who led it into Ethiopia; perhaps it was Tovera (Tovela), his son, the father of Murenga; it could even be an ancestor of Mambiri. The movement from Kush to the Zambezi River was certainly rapid. It took the tribe no more than a century to trek from Mbire in Tanganyika to the point of crossing the Zambezi River around the year 1 000 A.D.

In GURUUSWA, between Lake Malawi and eastern Zambia, the Mbire Soko tribe decided to sever blood relations between the major Houses in order to facilitate inter-marriage between them. The tribe was exogamous and is still so to this day. Foreign elements were too few for inter-marriage. Yet for its strength and security, it had to grow. To make sure that it continued to grow, the process of "Kucheka ukama" (ritual severing of blood relationships) was conducted between the major Houses of the tribe. A district was allocated to each such House. This was done at a place which was given the name GOVANWA in Guruuswa and this means "a place of partition." From this place, Chaminuka, Mushavatu and their descendants moved to the south of Lake Malawi. It was from here that their children, headed by Kutamadzoka, elder living son of Chaminuka, crossed the Zambezi River around 1 000 A.D., to establish the Mutapa Empire with Kutamadzoka himself as Mutapa I. The title of their chief was still Nembire and remained so for at least the next five hundred years. They called their new country MBIRE after their ancestor Mambiri and their first district in Tanganyika.

From this point on, the history of this country is largely confined to the descendants of Chaminuka and Mushavatu. The children of Runji, the elder brother of these men, were amongst them. The Venda people of the southern part of this country and the northern Transvaal are descendants of Runji. The reader should note that after the severance of blood relations at Govanwa north of the Zambezi River, only a segment of the Mbire Soko Tribe crossed the Zambezi into this country to found the Mutapa Empire. The other segments remained to the north of the river.

The question is, where are the descendants of those segments that remained to the north of the Zambezi? We have discussed Murenga, Tovera and Mambiri as the greatest known founding ancestors of this Mbire Soko Tribe; where did their cousins remain and where did their descendants spread to? We shall look into this when we move from southern Africa to consider the regions north of the Zambezi River.

So then, around 1 000 A.D., a segment of the Mbire Soko people invaded this country from the north-east across the Zambezi River. They found it occupied by members of the Dziva-Hungwe Family who had been there for at least two hundred years. These people were scattered in small pockets all over the northern, north-eastern and eastern sectors of this country, and in Mozambique. By the year 1 000 A.D., they had spread to the south as far as Zimbabwe Hill and possibly even as far as the Limpopo River. They were a sedentary agricultural,

pastoral and hunting community. They had been here for quite a time without danger from any quarter. The result was that they were loosely organised and complacent by the time the Mbire Soko arrived. As we saw earlier, these invaders were a highly structured community geared towards war. So the Dziva-Hungwe people were an easy prey to the invaders who harassed them, capturing their property, young women and young men. For this reason, the invaders won from them the name VATAPI (the captors and enslavers) and their paramount chief was of course, the chief MUTAPA. In this way, the Mbire Soko invasion marked the genesis of the Mbire Mutapa Empire.

The Dziva-Hungwe people ran away towards the south where we shall meet their descendants in South Africa very shortly. Some of them diverted towards the west and were driven further west into present-day Botswana where again we shall come across their descendants shortly. This Mbire Soko invasion thus converted the country into an almost entirely Soko country. As was made very clear in "From Mutapa to Rhodes," no less than 85% of the African population of Zimbabwe today consists of descendants of the Mbire Soko invaders. Gradually, they spread their tentacles further south and west and spread into the northern Transvaal and western Botswana. The whole of Mozambique south of the Zambezi was an integral part of the new Empire. To this day, Mozambique south of the Zambezi and Zimbabwe are largely a Mbire Soko sector, in the sense that the overwhelming majority of their citizens are descendants of the Mbire Soko Mutapas.

Of course a few pockets of the Dziva-Hungwe complex remained north of the Limpopo River and their descendants are still there to this day. The few Tongas who had crossed the Zambezi by the time of the invasion were also driven to the south. We have come across pockets of the Tonga-Tsonga-Hlengwe complex in the south east of this country already. A few of them spilled into South Africa.

We have so far not discussed the distinguishing features of the Great Soko Family, of which the Mbire Soko who trekked to the south were only a segment. Like the Dziva-Hungwe Family, the Soko Family was patrilineal. But whilst the Dziva-Hungwe complex was associated with water and aquatic animals, the Soko complex was associated with land and land animals and plants. Whilst the Dziva-Hungwe people were the "Masters of the Water," the Soko people were the "Masters of the Land." Whilst the Dziva-Hungwe people were an agricultural, pastoral and hunting community, the Soko people were an agricultural, pastoral and largely fishing community. The Dziva-Hungwe people tabooed the fish because they were associated with water; the Soko people ate the fish because they were associated with the land.

We have seen the Dziva-Hungwe people selecting all their totems from animals or items that associate closely with water. The Soko people picked and continue to pick their totems from animals or things closely associated with land. By virtue of this, they are easily distinguishable from the members of the Dziva-Hungwe complex. We cannot confuse them with the Tonga either

because these latter are matrilineal whilst the Sokos are patrilineal. Therefore, if one comes across anybody in Zimbabwe whose totem is a land animal or an item associated with land, one can pretty well be sure that that person is a member of the invading Mbire Soko group.

There is a big clan in this country whose totem is still Soko to this day. Soko (Tsoko or Shoko) is a monkey which of course is closely associated with land. These people however associate themselves more with the baboon than with the monkey. One can easily tell this from their praise-names such as Mukanya (a reference to the proud deportment of the Baboon), Mahomuhomu (the noise made by the big male baboon), Mushongaenemawere (he who associates with high and steep rocks or mountains). It is generally agreed that way back in Kush, their real totem was Gudo or Bveni (baboon). But it was thought that it did not sound nice to be referred to as baboon and they picked on a "muzukuru" (a nephew) of the baboon and this was the Monkey and so called themselves Soko.

The second segment to emerge from the Mbire Soko group was the Shava family descending from Mushavatu, the young brother of Chamisuka. It picked for its totem the "Mhofu" which is the eland. The third segment was the Moyo Chirandu group which originated around 1380. Chirandu is a reference to cattle and this is why, in Matabeleland, members of this segment are called Nkomo, which means cattle.

In the Changanized Chipinga area, they are called Sithole and this again means cattle. The fourth segment was the Humba group which is almost entirely in Mozambique today. Humba, Honde or Nguruve means 'pig'. By the year 1500 A.D., the Mbire Soko Family had segmented into these four. As I demonstrated in "From Mutapa to Rhodes" all the multiplicity of the so-called tribes in this country can be traced back to one or the other of these four segments unless they are not members of the Mbire Soko Family. The multiplicity includes the Tembos (Zebra), the Shumbas (Lion), the Ngaras (Porcupine), the Nzous (Elephant), the Nharis (Giraffe), the Gwais (Sheep) and several others mentioned in the above book.

The interesting thing is that, consciously or unconsciously, all of them picked on land animals for their totems. By virtue of this, they still associate closely with the land, for they are segments of "The Master of the Land." I have not found a single segment of this family that has associated itself with water in any way. I have found only one Dziva-Hungwe segment (the Mtoko Shimba Nyamuziwa dynasty) that has chosen to associate itself with land. But this is insignificant when compared to the vast numbers that have continued to associate with water. Considering that the Dziva-Hungwe Family has been in the region south of the Zambezi for well over a thousand years and that the Mbire Soko group has been here for a thousand years, it is indeed remarkable that the dividing line between them has been maintained to this day. Were it not for this, I would never have been able to detect that the multiplicity of communities in this country belonged to three original different ethnic groups.

One can now easily appreciate the enormous significance of the age-old totem system to which we have paid scant attention. If the totemic system in other regions of Africa is as strong as it is south of the Zambezi River, there will be no problem in reducing all the Bantu tribes to the original three Great Bantu Families.

We are now in a position to tackle one of the major questions posed above: — Were these three Great Bantu Families unrelated before? By the time I submitted "From Mutapa to Rhodes" to the publishers, I had no answer to this question and this is made clear in the "Appendix." But since then, I have discovered more information. It is this new information that has emboldened me to write this particular book. Quite apart from coming across very useful documents which concern other regions, in particular West Africa, that support my arguments, I have had two opportunities of chatting with Chaminuka and his Christian prophet (to be discussed in greater detail under Christianity) whose African name I now know; this is NGAUZA or NGAWUSA. This prophet is of course much older than Chaminuka. He is Chaminuka's shavi, (foreign spirit with special skills) because the first human being he ever possessed was Chaminuka. From then on, the two became closely associated and they possess the same medium. The fact that his first medium was Chaminuke means that he died long before Chaminuka. It is possible that he died even before Chaminuka was born. Ngauza was a Christian of foreign origins who did his missionary work in the Nile Valley among a segment of the Bantu people. The ancestors of the Mbire Soko people were part of that segment. No doubt he lived there very much like an African and this must be why he went to the extent of taking up a medium after his death and in the African community; he knew what was happening all around that community. It is very likely that he was able to write too, but in what script, I do not yet know.

According to both Chaminuka and Ngauza, the greatest ancestor of the Bantu in the Nile Valley, had three wives. The senior wife had several sons and daughters; the second wife also had sons and daughters; the third wife had daughters only. The name of this ancestor, we can only guess at from documents and this I shall do later. This ancestor — Bantu-Family drifted up the Nile River and settled on its own in its own region. It did not have foreign elements amongst it. Because it was exogamous and because it had to grow for its own survival, a decision was made that the three families descending from the three wives of the Bantu ancestor should sever their blood relationships and start inter-marrying. So ritual severance of blood relationships was conducted and the three ancestor-families became alien to each other and started to inter-marry.

The descendants of the senior wife elected to be the owners of the land and so became the "Masters of the Land", associating themselves with land and land animals. Out of all the land animals, they chose to associate themselves with the baboon "the proudest and nearest animal to the human being." But for reasons already given, they associated themselves with the monkey and so became Soko by totem:

The descendants of the second wife elected to be the owners of the water and began to associate themselves with water and aquatic animals. They went further to pick on a special aquatic animal for their totem and this was the fish. From then on, they started to taboo the fish and became hunters. The Sokos were the fish eaters. Although they also hunted, they looked upon both the baboon and the monkey as sacred animals and tabooed them. Because these descendants of the second wife associated themselves with water, they referred to themselves as the Dziva Family and Dziva means Pool of water. But of all the animals that lived in water, they tabooed only the fish initially with which they had elected to identify themselves. As this Dziva Family grew, one segment chose to identify itself with the fish eagle (Hungwe) and so became Dziva-Hungwe. It was a branch of this particular segment that drifted to the south to end up in Zimbabwe and this is why I am here referring to it as the Dziva-Hungwe Family. After settling in this country, it in turn started to segment into several branches, each of which picked up for its totem an aquatic animal or object as we have seen.

The children of the third wife had daughters only. In spite of this, it is said that their father decided to give them their inheritance too. The story says that the Soko "Masters of the Land" were given their own district to occupy and rule; the Dziva "Masters of the Water" were also given their own district to occupy and rule. The third district was set aside for the descendants of the third wife who were initially all daughters. The most senior of these daughters established herself as the chieftainess of their district. Because she was a chieftainess, it was awkward for her to marry and move to her husband's home. The husband had therefore to move to her court and this enabled her to continue living in her district and attend to her duties. Furthermore, it is related that she married a commoner and refused to be paid lobola for. It is further suggested that she initiated the process of love-proposal to this man. All this she did in order to claim ownership of the children. In this way, a tradition was established that whoever married a woman from this family moved to the home of his wife; that the children belonged to the wife and not to the husband; that the real head of the family was not the husband but the wife; that inheritance was to be through the mother's and not father's line. This also marked the beginning of chieftainesses within the African community. In short, all this marked the genesis of the matrilineal system within the African community.

Like the other two, this family also started to grow and segment. The segment that drifted to the South is the one we call Tonga. Those that drifted into other directions must have acquired for themselves different tribal names. But they were all the same matrilineal and this is the distinguishing mark of this third Bantu Family. In some segments of this matrilineal family, some men revolted against domination by women and staged what we can call coups to establish themselves as chiefs. After their deaths however, their chieftainships were inherited not by their sons but by their sisters' sons. In other words, this third Bantu Family ended up with both chiefs and chieftainesses. But despite this, it maintained the matrilineal system and, at least in central and southern Africa, it has remained so to this day.

My own feeling is that the details of what actually happened with regard to the original Bantu Family have been forgotten, leading to confusion. But something along the lines of what was suggested by Chaminuka and Ngauza must have happened. That there were three big Bantu Groups in Africa around the year 900 A.D., if not earlier, and that the majority of the Bantu today can still be traced back to the original three Great Bantu Families is indisputable and this is a fact that can be confirmed throughout central and southern Africa. What has been difficult all along was to detect the existence of the three and to know their distinguishing features.

By 600 A.D. the position in north-east Africa appears to be quite clear. Members of The Masters of the Water dominated the coastal belt of north-east Africa. It is possible they were actually assigned to this coastal region and this must be why they were designated Masters of the Water, which was a reference to the sea nearest to the Kushites. From here, they spread along the whole East African coastal belt to form what was later called by the Arabs The Zenj Empire. We know from El Masudi that their paramount king was called Waqlimi. In the middle of the tenth century, Masudi makes references to Sofala and makes it clear that the Sofala area was also part of the area ruled by Waqlimi. Today we know that the only Bantu people who had spilled across the Zambezi River by 800 A.D. were members of The Masters of the Water called HUNGWE and of the totem DZIVA and they were along the east coast of what is today Mozambique. These were the people who established earliest trading contacts with the Moor traders. We can therefore say with a degree of certainty that the Zenj Empire was an Empire of the Masters of the Water.

The East African interior south of Kush and north of the Zambezi River was dominated by the Tonga. Around 900 A.D. Mbire Soko traditions leave us in no doubt that the Mbire themselves met nobody else from the Great Lakes to the Zambezi but the Tonga. These contacts with the Tonga are enshrined in one of the greatest and oldest Mbire traditional tunes. This can only mean that the Tonga were the first to leave Kush and to spread through the interior of the East African belt. Evidence from other corners supports this argument. There is no tribe that appears to have occupied the southern regions of Zambia before the Tonga. To this day, they still dominate the whole Zambian belt from about Livingstone to the east along the Zambezi Valley. This is precisely the region to which the Mbire Soko Family claims to have driven them from west of Malawi. Furthermore, if one examines Namibia, one will find that it is dominated by the Ambo (Avambo) who are matrilineal to this day, and the Herero who are semi-matrilineal. Indeed, Namibia is the one country in Southern Africa that is truly Tonga. This suggests that the Tonga were the vanguard of the interior Bantu migrants from the north-east, just as the Dziva were the vanguards along the east coast. It means too that the Tonga were the first to penetrate the Congo Region.

All this suggests that the Kingdom of Kush of 600 A.D. was dominated by the Sokos. This must be so because the Sokos were the last of the three Great Bantu Families to leave north-east Africa. They were subjected to the greatest

onslaught from the Mohammedan Arabs who attacked Kush after the death of Mohammed. It was their fragments that shattered the Dziva-Hungwe south of the Zambezi River around 1 000 A.D. When we consider West Africa, we will again find that the Sokos were the last to reach there to create the Songhay Empire, in the same way that they created the Mutapa Empire south of the Zambezi River at about the same time. This means that Kush of 600 A.D. was a Soko Kingdom. It means it was the Sokos who caused tremors to the south and west of the Nile Valley after 640 — tremors that quickened Bantu colonization of the continent of Africa.

When I state that the Zenj Empire was a DZIVA Empire, the reader must not imagine that there were no segments of the Sokos and Tonga amongst those Dzivas. Likewise, when I state that the Tongas occupied the interior of East Africa, it must not be thought that there were no segments of Dzivas and Sokos amongst them. In the Kingdom of Kush of 600 A.D. there must have been segments of the Dzivas and Tongas too. Each Empire or Kingdom is identified with its ruling dynasty.

What this does mean is simply that the Zenj Empire was ruled by a Dziva dynasty and was dominated by Dziva people; the Tonga Kingdom in the interior was ruled by a Tonga dynasty and dominated by Tonga people; the Kingdom of Kush of 600 A.D. was ruled by a Soko Paramount and dominated by Soko people. What is true of here is true of every other Empire. The Mutapa, Songhay, Mali and Ghana Empires serve as good examples of this. Even today, the position has not changed at all. When for instance we say today Zimbabwe is a Mbire country or S. Africa and Botswana are Dziva countries, all we mean is that the vast majority of Zimbabweans are of Mbire origin and those in S. Africa and Botswana are mostly of Dziva origins. We never imply that minorities of the other Great Families do not exist among them. Such an argument would certainly be very naive. Examined from any angle, it is difficult to reject consanguinity and geographical contiguity between at least the Dzivas and Sokos. How could a people originally unrelated and not living in the same geographical area so neatly divide themselves into "The Masters of the Land" and "The Masters of the Water"? This would not be possible. Furthermore, as we will see later in Bantu cultural traits, the Bantu or Negro Trilogy is still remembered in all parts of Africa and is commemorated and rehearsed in various forms throughout the continent. This suggests the original trinity of the three Great African Families.

However, before we go into this, let us first examine the two foreign tribes that emerged in Africa that are not originally Bantu but are mixed up with the Bantu today. We need to do this in order to be fully aware that there are amongst us communities that do not fit into any of our Great Bantu Families. This is not only true of Zimbabwe but also of possibly the majority of African states.

THE MWENYI FAMILY

The people known by the tribal name MWENYI in Zimbabwe are of Mohammedan and therefore Arab origins. Whilst their original common tribal name in this country was Mwenyi, they like the others, have segmented into clans with different tribal names and most of which inter-marry today. The name Mwenyi itself appears to have been derived from "Mweni" which means stranger or visitor. Of course originally the Arabs or Moors were no more than strangers and visitors.

In central Mashonaland, these people are still known as Mwenyi today. In the southern sector of the country, they are known by the tribal name Lemba or VaRemba; in the Chipinga area, they are called Dhlwayo or Beta; in Manicaland, they are called Hwesa or Ishwa (termite). Their original totem in this country was MBEVA (mouse), also known as MUSONI, and the majority of them are still Mbeva (or MBEWA) to this day. Those in the southern sector of the country are generally known by the totem Zhou but this is a reference not to the elephant but to a little mouse with a protruding nose; thus they are still Mbeva.

These people descended from the early Moor traders who brought goods from the north along the east coast and traded with our ancestors. This subject is dealt with in "From Mutapa To Rhodes" and therefore we do not need to go over the details again here. What is important is that these early Mohammedan traders commingled with our ancestors to give birth to the people we now call the Mwenyi, who in this country are looked upon as Bantu. These people still observe certain Mohammedan traditions to this day. Some of them for instance, still practise circumcision, many of them still do not eat the meat of a beast killed by anybody else other than a member of the clan. In addition, the beast must have its throat severed with a knife. This is evidence of living association with Mohammedan traditions to this day. So a new "Bantu tribe" was injected into the members of the three Great Bantu Families.

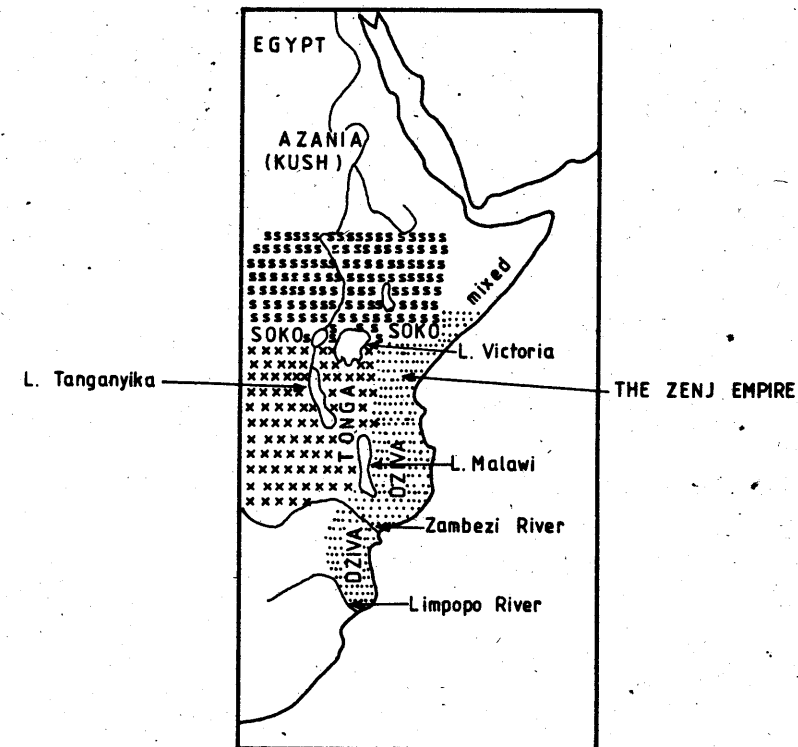
Because the Moor traders started to trade with this country between 900 A.D. and 1 000, we can assume that the earliest members of this new family came into existence then.

THE CHIKUNDA FAMILY

After 1 500, the Portuguese started to be a factor along the east coast. Gradually, they tried to penetrate into the interior to get to the sources of the gold coming from the Mutapa Empire and sold to the Moor traders. By 1 600, some of them had settled in the Zambezi Valley and lived very much like Africans. They carved out chunks of land for themselves (prazos) and became landlords. They commingled with Africans and gave birth to a new tribe we call the Chikunda tribe in this country. The Njanja Sinyoro family might well be a segment of the Chikunda tribe.

Map 6

BANTU POSITION IN EASTERN AND SOUTH EASTERN AFRICA AROUND 900 AD



KEY



Area dominated by the Dziva family (ZENJ)



Area dominated by the Tonga family



Area dominated by the Soko family

It is necessary to point out the existence of these people in this country for the reason that our attention is centred on the whole continent of Africa south of the Sahara. The Mutapa Empire was not the first nor was it the last in Africa to be influenced by the Portuguese from around 1500. Therefore, we should expect elsewhere in Africa, other people of Portuguese descent without, of course, being called Chikunda. Although they are a small minority in this country, they are quite a sizeable minority in Mozambique.

This completes the analysis of Zimbabwe. To be absolutely sure that Zimbabwe is in no way unique in Africa, we need one or two more test cases from the continent. Thereafter, we can cover the continent briefly and see if we can find representatives of the three Great Bantu Families.

THE TSWANA : CASE STUDY II

The early history of Botswana cannot be analysed before that of Zimbabwe, because the country was occupied by segments of Bantu people from Zimbabwe. It was occupied by the Bantu across the eastern border and not from any other corner. I am not suggesting that there were no small minorities that might have migrated to Botswana from the north, west or even south. This did take place, especially from the south in the early nineteenth century. But the descendants of such groups form a very small minority. In addition, those who migrated from the south are like the Ndebele or the Ngoni, who were only making a return journey. Even so, they can be traced back to one or the other of the three Great Bantu Families.

I am not the only one to believe that the Tswana occupied their country from the east. Schapera wrote, — "All that can be said with some confidence is that the Tswana were already in the eastern half of their present habitat by about A.D. 1600." To the east of the Botswana border is Zimbabwe and what Schapera is really saying is that the Tswana came from Zimbabwe. Memories of origins from north-east Africa have not been lost by the Tswana either; "All those native authorities of whom the writer has sought information upon the subject (of Tswana) have declared that before coming from the north, the place whence the first people came was the east, some indefinite place towards the sun rising." (9) The author goes on, — "The last (the Kopana people) assert that their forefathers were driven from the central intra-lacustrine regions of Africa by tribes similar to if not the actual Bachoana tribe . . ." (10) We are back in the region of the Great East African Lakes again; these people admit that they were driven out of the area by a group identical to them. This reminds us of the ancestors of the Shona.

There cannot be any doubt that the vast majority of the Tswana people are members of the Dziva-Hungwe Family. It would be no exaggeration to put the percentage of these people to as high as 90. Certainly one of the great tribes of Botswana is the Kwena tribe. But if we remember what we came across in Zimbabwe, we should easily realize that Kwena means "Ngwenya" and this is a

crocodile. This immediately places the Kwena in the camp of the Great Dziva-Hungwe Family.

The Kwena of Botswana believe that their totem and tribal name were derived from Kuena, their ancestor chief. But I need to remind the reader that Kuena itself was not a name, but a totem meaning crocodile. Later, under South Africa, we are going to find the Zulus including the Ndebele claiming that they descended from Siziba. This again is not a name, but a totem meaning "Pool".

All the great Tswana tribes are segments of the Kwena and this includes the Bamangwato who provided the paramount chiefs in the 19th century. All this is well summarized by Stow in the following paragraph:-

"It is evident that the siboko (totem) of the ancient stem was the Kuena or Crocodile **even before the lifetime of the chief Kuena**, the special founder of the Bakuena proper. He therefore probably derived from the ancient siboko (totem) of his race (and this is precisely what actually happened). The great antiquity of this tribal emblem is proved by the fact that originally all the great branches from the old stem retained the same siboko, although some were earlier offshoots than that of Kuena himself. Thus the Bahurutsi branch is called Bahurutsi a Malope; the Bamangwato, Bamangwato a Malope; while the Bangwaketse, Bangwaketse a Malope, the people or men of a son of Malope; while the Bakuena are called Bakuena a Masilo, the people of Kuena, the son of Masilo." Thus even the Bamangwato, the Hurutsi and the Ngwaketse are segments of the Dziva-Hungwe Family.

The original split in the ranks of the Kuena way back in Zimbabwe is well recalled by the Shona. They relate that when the Kwena were overwhelmed by the invading Mbire Soko Family that established the Mutapa Empire, one segment submitted to the invaders whilst another refused to submit and ran away to the west. Those members of the family who submitted to the invaders were derided by those who did not and were given the derogatory name Chi-Kwena **Matope** meaning the "little crocodiles". Those that refused to submit became the "big crocodiles". It therefore looks as if the leader of the "little crocodiles" was given the nickname Matope, hence the reference to "the men or sons of Matope."

It may be necessary at this point to mention the Suthu. These too are members of the Kwena group. The Suthu of Moshesh, those of the Transvaal and those in Botswana are all segments of the Kwena tribe. As Stow puts it again, — "The term Basutu was applied exclusively to those clans which represent the Southern Bakuena." Thus when we analyse South Africa, it becomes unnecessary to examine Lesoto since we can see the close association of the people of that country with the Kwena branches in Botswana and parts of South Africa.

To complete our examination of the Dziva-Hungwe Family in Botswana, let us briefly look at branches that no longer associate themselves with the crocodiles. These include the Bakubon, who call themselves the men of the hippo; the Battaru, who call themselves the men of the python which is a reference to the

water python-called Mheta in Zimbabwe; the Banoga, who call themselves the men of the serpent which is also a reference to the python; the Batlapin who call themselves the men of the fish (Hove in Zimbabwe); the Bafukeng who call themselves the men of the mist or dew; the Bapulana who call themselves the men of the showers; the Bapula who call themselves the men of the rain; and the Baletsatsi who today call themselves the men of the sun. All these are known to be segments of the Great Dziva-Hunge Family whose ancestors were driven out of Zimbabwe by the invading Mbire Sokos who established the Mutapa Empire. That segments of this family should constitute about 90% of the Tswana people should not now be surprising at all. I made it clear earlier that they were the first Bantu people to occupy Zimbabwe. Since they were pushed to the south and west, we should expect the majority of the people there to be members of this family. This cannot leave us in any doubt whatever that they were the vanguard of the Bantu migrants from the north.

The Tswana of Mbire Soko origin are a small minority in Botswana. Most of them are still confined to the north-east and east of the country to this day. This should not now be surprising. These include the people referred to as Makalaka which only means Kalanga and we know already that these are people of Shona origin. Most of them are still Soko (Ncube) and Moyo to this day. We also find the Bakhatla tribe, who are referred to as men of the baboon, and these are closely associated with the Ncubes. The Banuka are people of Shave-Nhuka origins and are a branch of the Mbire Soko Family. Thus although they are a small minority, members of the Great Soko Family are present in Botswana.

The Tonga are even a smaller minority. In Botswana, they are referred to as the Batoka. They did not filter into Botswana through the east but from the north, from present-day Zambia. Here again, the important thing is that they are there in no matter how small a proportion. Like some Tonga communities in Zimbabwe, some of them seem to have been acculturated and converted from matriliney to patriliney.

SOUTH AFRICA : CASE STUDY III

Like Botswana, the early history of South Africa cannot be examined properly before that of Zimbabwe. There can be no doubt that the South African Bantu communities are offshoots of the Zimbabwean communities. Of course, South African history was complicated by the early arrival of the Dutch in the 17th century. This is so because early commingling between these Dutch people and the indigenous people of South Africa took place, resulting in the creation of new communities which are not common in other African states. The position was also complicated by the damming back of the Khoisan people by these Dutch, resulting in further commingling of these Khoisan people with both the Dutch and the Bantu. However, our attention is centred on people of Bantu origins and these are easily identifiable.

Like Botswana, South Africa is a largely Dziva-Hungwe country. It would be no exaggeration to say that at least 90% of the Bantu in South Africa are members of the Great Dziva-Hungwe Family. Again this should not be surprising, since they were the vanguard of the Bantu migrants from the north. In Zimbabwe and Mozambique, we came across the Dziva-Hungwe people as the original Bantu occupants of the area between the Zambezi and Limpopo. Around 1 000 A.D. we saw them being invaded by the members of the Mbire Soko Family who established the Mutapa Empire. These founders of the Mutapa Empire drove the members of the Dziva-Hungwe Family to the south and west. In the west, we have just come across their descendants in Botswana. We should therefore now expect to meet their descendants in South Africa.

In "From Mutapa To Rhodes", I drew the attention of the reader to the South African Limpopo border and argued that this border after 1 000 A.D. was a good indication of which Bantu group first occupied Zimbabwe and which was the next to follow it. We then saw Rennie and Grey pointing out that the first Bantu people to cross the Limpopo from Zimbabwe were the Mbedzi people of the totem Dziva. They went further to say that the next group was the Mbire group of the totem Soko. All this should now not be surprising considering that the Dziva-Hungwe people were the vanguard of the Bantu migrants from the Great East African Lakes. Because they were driven by the Mbire Soko invaders to the south and because they could not migrate beyond South Africa, we should expect a majority of Dziva-Hungwe people in that sector. Indeed, they are the overwhelming majority of the Bantu people in South Africa.

Almost all scholars have managed to see four main groups of Bantu people in South Africa and the following sums up this position: "Four main groups are normally distinguished where the Bantu speakers south of the Limpopo are concerned. These were the Venda themselves, the Sotho-Tswana, the Nguni and the Tsonga." (11) But we have come across the Venda as a segment of the Mbire Soko Family in Zimbabwe; we also have come across the Tsonga as a segment of the Tonga Family whose other segments in both Zimbabwe and Mozambique are Tsonga and Hlengwe.

In Botswana, we discovered that the Suthu were Kwena and therefore were members of the Dziva-Hungwe Family. Therefore, of the four Bantu groups scholars see in South Africa it is only the Nguni who have not yet been identified. Let me right away state categorically that they are segments of the Dziva-Hungwe Family as we shall see very shortly. So then, we now end up not with four Bantu groups in South Africa but three. These are the Venda and related communities; the Tsonga; and the Dziva-Hungwe divided into the Nguni and Suthu segments. This takes us back to square one. Let us first dispose of the minorities and then concentrate on the overwhelming majority later. The Tsonga group is undoubtedly the smallest of the three Bantu groups in South Africa.

When I discussed the Mbire Soko invasion of the region south of the Zambezi River around 1 000 A.D., I said that one or two pockets of Tonga people had already crossed the Zambezi and had joined the Dziva-Hungwe people in the north-east in present-day Mozambique. When the Dziva-Hungwe people were driven to the south by the invaders, the Tonga also ran away to the south and finally settled in the Lower Sabi Valley. From here, we saw some of them drifting in a north-westerly direction into the Nuanetsi-Chiredzi area of Zimbabwe and being called Tonga, Tsonga and Hlengwe. Many of them are still in Mozambique where they are referred to as the Mozambique Tonga, and Tsonga. Because they live in an environment dominated by patrilineal people, they have been acculturated into a semi-matrilineal group. But they are still a distinct group of their own to this day.

It was from this very region that segments of these people migrated to South Africa. It may be remembered that it was the Tsonga who dominated the neighbourhood of Delagoa Bay by the end of the eighteenth century and that it was they who were known as the Babudu or Maputo people, after whom the port of Lourenco Marques has now been renamed by the independant government of Mozambique. The South Africa Tonga and Tsonga are only offshoots of these people. All this is summed up by one authority in the following terms: "The Tsonga, occupying the coastal area from the Save River in Mozambique as far south as Saint Lucia Bay, spoke a language very different from Zulu. They differed culturally from the Zulu in some respects — by being fish-eaters for example, whilst the Nguni in general had fish taboos." (12) It is clear from this that the Tsonga are a different community altogether from the other Bantu people of South Africa. This is so because they are a segment of the Great Tonga Family and not the Dziva-Hungwe or Mbire Soko Families. Here again, all that I want to demonstrate to the reader is that segments of the Tonga Family are present in South Africa. They are a very small minority but they are there all the same.

The first of the four Bantu groups mentioned by Davenport above is the Venda group. It may be remembered that the Venda are on both sides of the Limpopo River and that they are essentially an offshoot of the Shona. In "From Mutapa To Rhodes" we found the Shona asserting that the Venda were their cousins.

We then found that many of these people still belong to the totem group Ncube which in Shona is Soko. We even found some of their members officiating at the cult centres at the Matopos. We were left in no doubt that they were cousins of the Mbire Soko Family and therefore are descendants of the invaders that created the Mutapa Empire between the Zambezi and the Limpopo.

Although many of the Venda people in the Transvaal are Ncube (Soko) by totem, some of them have changed to NDOU and this means elephant. It is common knowledge that the Venda have just won their Bantustan independence and that they are in the process of constructing a new capital for their Homeland. This new capital is called Thoyo ya Ndou and this means 'the head of the elephant'. In the centre of their national emblem is a big head of an elephant. To understand this close association with the elephant, one has to cross back into Zimbabwe, the home of the Venda before they settled in the Transvaal.

The greatest Shona spirit in this country, and that operated from Njelele in the Matopos in 1896, is Murenga from whom "Chimurenga" was derived. But that very Murenga is also called Sororenzou (the head of the elephant) and he is even better known by this name. We may remember that Murenga Sororenzou is the father of Runji, Chaminuka, Mushavatu and Nehanda. The Venda are direct descendants of Runji as much as the Mhofu Shava people in Zimbabwe are descendants of Mushavatu. Venda association with the elephant simply means association with Murenga Sororenzou. By calling their capital Thoyo ya Ndou, they are only naming it after their greatest known ancestor and that is Murenga Sororenzou. There can thus be no question that the Venda are merely a segment of the Mbire Soko Family that drove the Dziva-Hungwe people to the south and created the Mutapa Empire.

The Venda are clearly the biggest representatives of the Mbire Soko Family south of the Limpopo. Like all the others, they too segmented into branches and this was given much encouragement by the Mfecane of the first half of the nineteenth century. In spite of that, they associated themselves with land and land animals and have continued to do so to this day. In that way, they have maintained their identity as a segment of "The Masters of the Land."

The Dziva-Hungwe Family is represented by two major segments in South Africa. These are the Suthu and the Nguni segments. We have already come across segments of the Suthu in our examination of the Tswana and we have discovered that they are Kwena (crocodile) and therefore are a segment of the Dziva-Hungwe complex. We also discovered that they are broadly divided into the northern and southern segments. Those we have come across in Botswana are branches of the northern segment. Probably the most important of the southern segment are those of Lesotho who were brought together by Moshesh during the chaotic days of the Mfecane. They are by no means among the most senior of the Suthu Houses. However, what we need to check is whether they

are really Kwena (crocodile) and therefore members of the Great Dziva-Hungwe Family. There is no doubt that they are.

"The village, rather than the Kinship clan, was the limit of Sotho society, even before the Difagane. Indeed, had society been structured more pronouncedly on Kinship lines, it would have been difficult for Moshweshwe, the head of the Mokotedi, a very junior branch of the Kwena, either to establish his rule over the southern Sotho in the first place, or to build up so distinctive a dynasty of his own." (13) Thus we are left in no doubt that the Suthu of Lesotho are Kwena (crocodile) and therefore a segment of the Great Dziva-Hungwe complex. The other Suthu people in South Africa are no exception to this rule. We now need to divert to the Nguni, whom we have hardly mentioned so far.

The Nguni, like the Suthu, are divided into two large segments today. These are the northern segment, consisting largely of the Zulus and the Swazi, and the southern segment of which the Xosa are the dominant community. Whilst the Kwena migrated to South Africa through the Transvaal, the Nguni did so along the coast and initially settled in the Natal region. It was from this area that the Xosa migrated further to the south and ultimately conflicted with the Dutch who were also advancing up north and north-east from the area of Cape Town.

The Cape frontier is a very good indicator of not only the sequence of migrations from the north but also of who migrated. We observed earlier the very early emergence of the Bushman people in Africa. We then saw the Hottentots being born out of commingling of the Hamites and the Bushmen. These in turn were followed by the birth of the Negroes. The Bushmen started to drift away from the Nile Valley; they were followed by the Hottentots. These in turn were followed by the Bantu. What appears to have clearly happened is that the weakest moved away from the strongest and were in turn followed by the next weakest who drove to the south those ahead of them. This is clearly mirrored at the Cape frontier. When Vasco da Gama sailed around the southern tip of Africa in 1497, he came across the Bushmen but no-one else. When he reached Natal, he heard of the Bantu people. When the Dutch settled at the Cape in 1652, they were immediately confronted by the Bushmen and by no-one else. But as they pushed into the interior, they then came into contact with the Hottentots. As they pushed still further into the eastern interior of the Cape, they then came across the Bantu in the 18th century who were also pushing along the coast from the north. These Bantu people were the Xosa who clearly were the vanguard of the Bantu migrants from the north. This order or sequence of migration by the indigenous peoples of Africa did not start in Zimbabwe but way back in north-east Africa, many centuries before the advent of da Gama or van Reebeck. Thus the South African Cape frontier does not only help us to understand elements of early South African history but that of the continent of Africa as a whole.

However, before we go into the details of Nguni history, let us find out if these people have any memories of their origins back in north Africa. If they and the Suthu are both segments of the Dziva-Hungwe complex, then the Nguni ought

to have come from north-east Africa as well, since the Suthu have already told us that they migrated to the south from that corner. About this one Xosa authority has this to say: — "The original locality of the Xosa tribe is difficult to determine but the evidence points to an East African home. The fact of their arrival in Northern Natal about the same time as the AbaMbo, an East African tribe, seems to indicate their connection in a combined movement. Then again, a fact of still greater significance is that in the religious sphere many of the Xosa customs and sacrifices seem to correspond with customs of Jewish origin." (14) Thus even the southern tip of Africa sees its earlier connections with north-east Africa. Early connections with people of Jewish origin can still be detected in the customs and traditions of the Xosa at least a thousand years after leaving north-east Africa.

Next, we need to examine whether or not the Xosa still remember their blood relationships with the Nguni in the Natal area today. I may mention right away that all these people are called Nguni because they descended from a common ancestor by that name and this is well remembered. "... the earliest known name of the Xosa tribe was Abe-Nguni. The name was derived from a progenitor in the royal line called Munguni." (15) The same writer goes further and adds, "The next chief of importance after Munguni was Xosa, from whom the tribe derives its name Ama-Xosa. While the term Abe-Nguni still lives, as had been said, yet it has fallen into the background and the term Ama-Xosa has for nearly four centuries been the more intimate tribal appellation."

Segmentation and fragmentation or fission have been features of Bantu communities for long centuries. This was so partly because land was plentiful in the early days and any ambitious person could hive off and start off his own off-shoot; partly because the tribal set-up itself tended to encourage segmentation; and partly because polygamy and the system of inheritance adopted encouraged friction between the major Houses with the result that succession disputes were common and these often ended up in warfare between the claimants to the chieftainship. Whoever was defeated in such a conflict had to migrate to a new locality and that meant the beginning of a new tribal segment, if not a new tribe altogether. All this is well summed up by the same authority quoted above in the following terms: — "Shortly after his time (Munguni's) various upheavals took place within the tribe which, though they did not disrupt the tribe, created within it several large divisions. The first of these took place in approximately the year 1 600, when a younger brother, Tshawe, of the reigning chief, Cira, in a great battle over-threw the latter and reigned in his stead. This circumstance created within the tribe the important section called the Ama-Tshawe, which since that day has been the ruling element in the tribe. The Gealekas and Gaikas are of the Ama-Tshawe. Later again, in about 1750, through internecine war, the right-hand house, the Ama-Rarabe or Gaikas, became independent of the great house of the Gealekas."

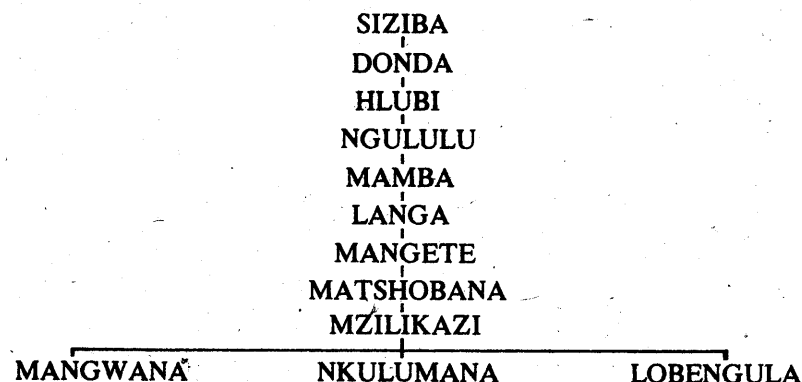
Thus all the segments of the Nguni complex are called Nguni because they descended from Munguni. Segmentation then set in and some of these segments

started to drift away from the Natal area towards the Cape. In the forefront were the ancestors of the people we today call Xosa. By the end of the 19th century, the Xosa alone consisted of no less than thirty segments. These are the Ama-Cira, the Ama-Jwara, the Ama-Tshawe, the Ama-Kwemnta, the Ama-Qwambi, the Ama-Kwayi, the Imi-Dange, the Ama-Ntinde, the Ama-Helke, the Ama-Gwali, the Ama-Mbalu, the Ama-Velelo, the Ama-Mbede, the I-Tsonyama, the Ama-Zangwa, the Imi-Wangu, the Ama-Ndhlambe, the Ama-Gasela, the Ama-Nggika, the Imi-Dushane, the Ama-Gwelane, the Ama-Jinggi, the Imi-Ngcangatelo, the Ama-Toyire, the Ulo-Zala, the Ama-Ntakwande, the Ama-Bamba, the Ama-Nzoto, the Ama-Nkabane and the Ama-Nqabe. If the Dutch had not checked the Xosa advance to the south, if they had not controlled Xosa political development along the traditional lines, if the land mass of Africa had no southern limit, just imagine what would have taken place within the Xosa tribal complex alone by today. The above list of Xosa tribes is not exhaustive. There was no end to the processes of segmentation and fission within any African tribal complex. This explains how the Xosa parted with the rest of the Nguni.

Having now established that all the Nguni people descended from a common ancestor and are segments of one original tribe, let us now examine whether or not there are any traits among them which qualify them to be members of the Great Dziva-Hungwe Family. For this, we need to turn to the Xosa cousins still in Natal.

It is common knowledge that the Zulus do not eat fish to this day. This has been mentioned earlier. It is common knowledge that, generally, all the Nguni tribes taboo the fish and look upon it as a sacred animal. In the context of African customs and traditions, this means that the totem of the Nguni tribes is fish (Hove in Zimbabwe). This immediately throws the whole Nguni family into the Great Dziva-Hungwe Family of which the Kwena are members. Let us now look at the same issue from a different angle.

The Ndebele tribe founded by Mzilikazi is well-known as an off-shoot of the Zulu tribe. Examination of its ancestry will produce an interesting result. Here is the ancestry from the earliest known ancestor:-



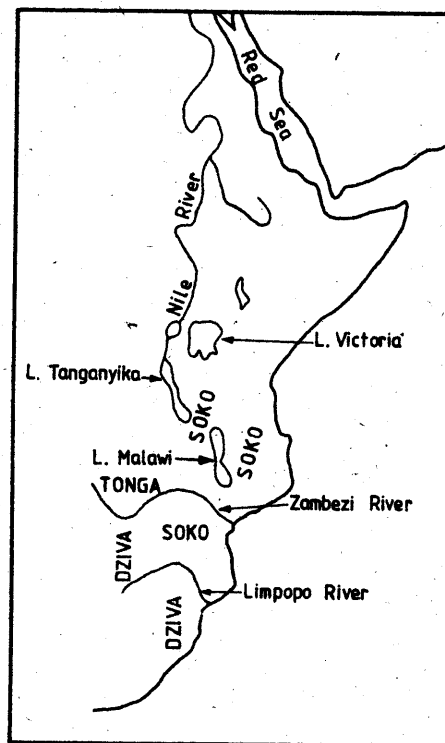
The earliest known ancestor is SIZIBA. We may remember that this means "Pool" and is no more than the Dziva that we came across in Zimbabwe. This name is clearly no name in the usual sense of the word at all but a totem (Dziva). This clearly places the Ndebele, a segment of the Zulu, in the Dziva-Hungwe Family. Further, polygamy being the accepted norm in the African social institutions, each of the ancestors above Mzilikazi must have had several wives; each must have a chain of descendants today; each must therefore have had cousins. But where today are the descendants of these cousins? Where are the descendants of these ancestors of Mzilikazi and by what names are they known today? Hlubi is one of these ancestors but if we turn to the Xosa, we come across a Hlubi tribe; is this coincidence or are they descended from Hlubi who is also one of the ancestors of Mzilikazi? In view of the segmentation and fission that we examined above, can this come as a surprise?

There is no reason to doubt that the ancestry of Mzilikazi is also the ancestry of the Swazi, the Ndwandwe, the Mtetwa, the Zulu, the Xosa and all the others who fall under the blanket-term "Nguni" today.

This covers even the Shangaans and the Nguni in Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania. Indeed, one needs only to scrutinize their praise-names and sayings connected with their dynasties to be left in no doubt that the whole group is closely associated with water and is undoubtedly a segment of the Dziva-Hungwe Family.

From this analysis alone, one can see the validity of my earlier assertion that at least 90% of the Bantu people in South Africa are members of the Great Dziva-Hungwe Family. Expressed differently, South Africa, like Botswana, is a Dziva-Hungwe country. So long as we recall the sequence of the great Bantu migrations from the north, we should not find this situation surprising.

BANTU POSITION IN EASTERN AND SOUTH EASTERN AFRICA AROUND 1200AD



CHAPTER 4

WEST AFRICA

That a definite tribal pattern does exist in Africa south of the Zambezi can now not be doubted. Association with land, association with water and matriliney are the most prominent features of that pattern. In other words, there are three distinct family Bantu groups in southern Africa. The question now is, — Are these three family groups a feature of southern Africa only? It is not my intention to analyse any other region of Africa in the way I have analysed the region south of the Zambezi. My aim is to show that southern Africa is not unique in this respect. Those interested can continue the analysis in the other regions. This should not be a big problem, now that we know the pattern.

I have selected West Africa next because the region is thousands of miles away from southern Africa. It is also evident that we in Southern Africa definitely parted from our West African cousins more than a thousand years ago. If, in view of this physical and time distance, we are still able to identify in West Africa segments of the three Great Bantu Families, then we have no reason to doubt that the tribal pattern that obtains in southern Africa also obtains in other regions of Africa; we will have no reason to doubt that all Africa south of the Sahara is populated mainly by segments of the three Great Bantu Families. Fortunately, early West African history is documented by Arab travellers and this gives us considerable help.

I want however, to make it clear that the tribal names applied to the West Africans are different from those applied to the tribes elsewhere. This is so because after the initial separation in north-east Africa, each segment started to make its own separate history and had its own ancestry. As should be clear by now, most of the tribal names were derived from particular ancestors that are land-marks in the history of each segment. Therefore, we should not necessarily expect the tribal names Mbire, Hungwe and Tonga to reappear in West Africa or anywhere else. But we should all the same expect the main dividing features, namely, association with land, association with water and matriliney to be consistent if indeed Africa is populated by segments of the three Great Bantu Families.

(1) THE EMPIRE OF GHANA

I stressed repeatedly that the reader should take note of the sequence of the tribes that migrated to southern Africa. This was so because that order of migration might help us to understand who created what empire in West Africa. As we are going to see shortly, the Bantu reached West Africa at the same time that the Dziva-Hungwe people occupied the region to the south of the Zambezi River. If these Dziva-Hungwe people were the vanguard of the Bantu migrants to southern Africa, and we now have no reason to doubt this, is it not likely that segments of this same Family were the first ones to occupy West Africa and therefore the ones that established the Empire of Ghana towards the end of the 8th century A.D.?

The tribal name of the Africans who created the Empire of Ghana was KAYAMAGA. This is also known to be the name of their first chief in West Africa. The capital of the Empire was Kumbi Saleh. By 800 A.D. the Empire was certainly in existence as is attested by Arab travellers who recorded what they actually saw in the region. The first of these travellers was El Bekri who in the year 1067 reported the following about Ghana, — "The king of Ghana can put 200 000 warriors in the field, more than 40 000 of them being armed with bow and arrow. Ghana is the title of the king of this people and the name of their country is Aoukar. The king who governs them at the moment — is called Tenkamenin who came to the throne in 1062." This suggests an old well-established Empire which must have been in existence for well over a century. El Bekri goes on: —

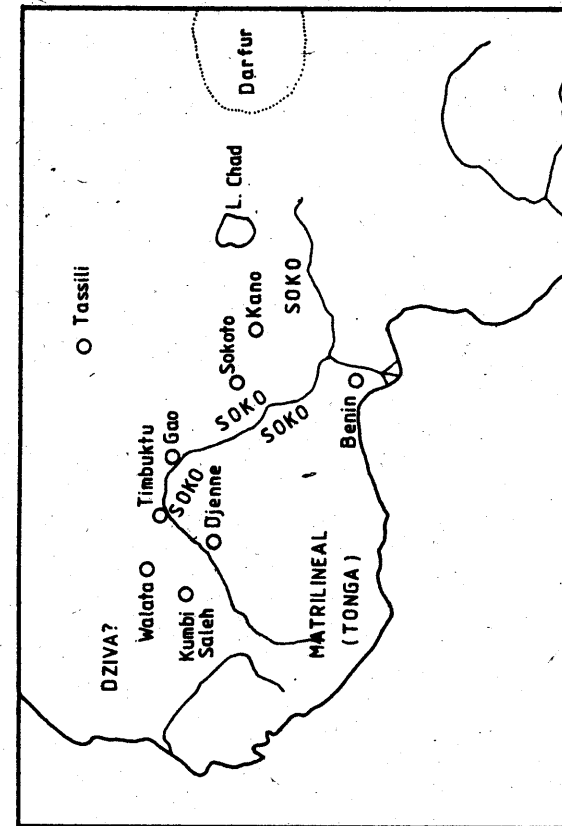
"When he gives audience to his people to listen to their complaints and set them to rights, he sits in a pavilion around which stand his horses caparisoned in cloth of gold; behind him stand ten pages holding shields and gold mounted swords; and on his right hand are the sons of the princes of the empire, splendidly clad and with gold plaited into their hair. The governor of the city is seated on the ground in front of the king, and all around him are his vizirs in the same position. The gate of the chamber is guarded by dogs of an excellent breed who never leave the king's seat; they wear collars of gold and silver. The beginning of an audience is announced by the beating of a kind of drum which they call "deba" made of a long piece of hollowed wood . . ." This gives us important hints on some aspects of the Ghana Empire. El Bekri called it "the land of gold" and it seemed to deserve the name. The gold mined in the south was mainly exchanged for salt obtained from the desert to the north.

No doubt these documents do not give us the full picture of the people who created this Empire. There are hints that they might be patrilineal and they were of course ruled by chiefs. But our major distinguishing features are association with land, association with water and matriliney. Unfortunately, the Arab documents do not help in this regard and we have to make guesses from other areas. My impression is however that the founders of the Ghana Empire were members of the Dziva-Hungwe Family. One reason is that segments of this family were certainly the vanguards of the Bantu migrants to the south. This being so, it is very likely that the vanguards of the Bantu migrants to West Africa were also segments of this same family. It is clear that the Dziva-Hungwe people were the first of the Bantu people to leave the Nile Valley. But these Bantu people did not all flock to the south; some migrated to other regions, including West Africa. Whatever impetus these people received from the Nile Valley propelled further those who had already left the Valley before the last push. The Dziva people who had left the Valley earlier than any other Bantu group are therefore likely to have been pushed further west and, for this reason, are likely to have reached West Africa before the other two.

We actually have written evidence to prove that the second Empire in West Africa was created by segments of the Tonga people. We may remember that

Map 9

BANTU POSITION IN THE WESTERN SUDAN AROUND 1200 AD



the Tonga were the second Bantu group to leave the East African Great Lakes, and that they were immediately behind the Dziva-Hungwe people on the way to the south. This supports my impression that the sequence of these Great Bantu Families on the way to the south also obtained in West Africa. This impression is further strengthened by the fact that the third Empire to be created in West Africa was established by the Sokos. This is established in Arab documents. We may remember that in southern Africa, the counterparts of the people who created the Songhay Empire in West Africa were the Soko people who established the Mutapa Empire. They were the third of the Bantu migrants from the Great Lakes. In West Africa, we now discover that the Sokos were the third to arrive and to create the Songhay Empire. But, we come across no other Empire created by these early migrants to West Africa which we could attribute to the Dziva people. This makes me again think that the Ghana Empire was created by segments of the Dziva-Hungwe people. These people are certainly present in West Africa and are easily identifiable in the Songhay Empire.

(2) THE MALI EMPIRE

The next empire to emerge was the Mandingo Empire of Mali. The Mandingo people started their rise to supremacy before the collapse of the Ghana Empire. In fact, it was the rise of the new Mali Empire that eclipsed that of Ghana. The most celebrated king of the Mandingo people was Mansa Kankan Musa who came to power in 1307.

A report written by Ibn Battuta on the Mandingo state of Mali leaves us in no doubt whatever that this empire was established by segments of the people we called Tonga elsewhere. "Their men show no signs of jealousy whatever; no one claims descent from his father, but on the contrary from his mother's brother. A person's heirs are his sister's sons, not his own sons. This is a thing which I have seen nowhere in the world except among the Indians of Malabar. . . . their women show no bashfulness before men and do not veil themselves."

In Battuta's terminology, this is a thing we have not seen anywhere else in Africa except among the Tonga. What has been described above is a matrilineal system identical to the Tonga system practised to this day in countries like Zambia and Malawi. Thus we have discovered that Tonga segments are not only present in West Africa but were the ones who actually created the second known empire in the region — the Mali Empire.

(3) THE SONGHAY EMPIRE

The third empire in West Africa was the Songhay Empire. Its capital was Gao and its most renowned emperor was Askia the Great, who came to power in 1493. This empire was destroyed by Moroccan invaders in the year 1591. If the sequence of the tribes that migrated to southern Africa obtains in West Africa, we should expect the founders of the Songhay Empire to be segments of the

Great Soko Family, since they were the third and last of the three Great Bantu Families to leave the Nile Valley. Here again, Arab documents are extremely helpful and, for the first time, we now actually come across names and expressions that we have seen in southern Africa. One authority sums up the foundation of the Songhay Empire in the following terms, — "At some remote time the whole of this river region (the Niger region) is said to have been populated by a people traditionally divided into "masters of the soil" and "masters of the water" and these are said to have belonged in turn to an ancient family of West African peoples. To these early inhabitants, migrants were added. Tradition says that these migrants included the Sorko, a fisher-folk coming from the east and the Gow who were hunters; and these two appear among the founders of the Songhay nation." (16)

In a separate work, Levzion writes: —

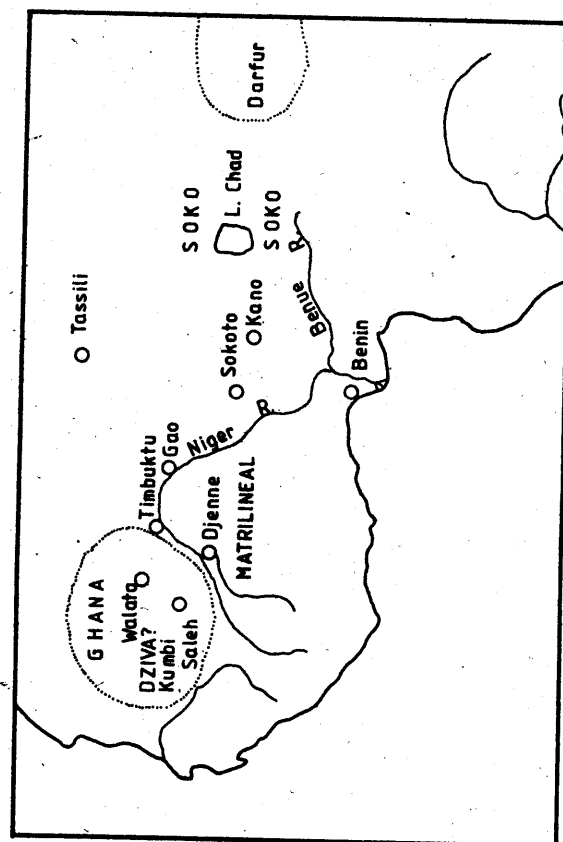
"Jenne, the other important centre of trade and Islamic learning — over two hundred miles up the Niger river — was in all respects a Sudanese town. The old inhabitants of Jenne were the Bozo fishermen. These have remained until the present-day 'owners of the earth and water' in the ritual sense of the expression . . ." (17) Elsewhere, he adds, "The fleet was most important in the military exploits of Songhay. This is explained by the fact that the dominant element among the Songhay were the Sorko fisherman of the Niger. The complementary elements — which together with the Sorko formed this heterogeneous people — were the Gow hunters and the Do farmers. The Sorko navigated up the river from Dendi and reached the region of Bentia, north of Tillabery, where they found hippopotami in abundance. Mobile and warlike people, the Sorko became not only 'masters of the water' but also rulers of the farmers, 'owners of the earth,' who lived in the region of Bentia. There, they were joined by the hunters and a town by the name of Kukiya developed as the capital of the Songhay nation." (18)

Several important points emerge clearly from all this. It is stated that among the early inhabitants of this region before the Songhay Empire, were "masters of the soil" and "masters of the water." This amounts to saying that the earliest Negro inhabitants of this region were the Soko Masters of the Land and the Dziva Masters of the Water. The next point to emerge equally clearly is that these early migrants were overwhelmed by a new wave of migrants dominated by the Sokos who proceeded to found the Songhay Empire. But these Soko founders of the Songhay Empire were assisted by segments of the Dziva Masters of the Water, who here are being referred to as the hunters. Their West African tribal name was Gow. It is possible that those referred to as the "Do farmers" were also a separate segment of the Sokos or Dzivas or maybe, even, the Tonga. The founders of the Songhay Empire were clearly a heterogeneous group dominated by the Soko fisher-folk.

What all this means is that the early waves of Negro people to settle in West Africa were segments of the three Great Negro Families; their invaders and conquerors were still segments of the same three Great Families. How can we

Map 8

BANTU POSITION IN THE WESTERN SUDAN AROUND 900AD



avoid this conclusion when all the early communities we meet with in West Africa are either "Masters of the Soil" or "Masters of the Water" or the "Matrilineal Group"? The important question is, — Where are the descendants of all these people today? Where are the descendants of the matrilineal founders of the Mali Empire? What tribal appellations do all these people have today? Having seen what happened in the whole region south of the Zambezi — segmentation and fragmentation of the three Great Bantu Families into a multiplicity of communities that inter-marry and thus appear as if they were unrelated originally — is it not logical to conclude that all of West Africa is populated by no more than segments of the three Great Bantu Families?

The quotations above complete our search in West Africa for segments of the three Great Bantu Families that we came across in Southern Africa. Previously, we had no evidence of the presence in West Africa of segments of the Dziva-Hungwe people. In the above quotations, they are actually labelled "the masters of the water," and this is exactly the description I gave to them in Southern Africa. Furthermore, we now know the tribal name applied to them in West Africa and this is "Gow". The Gow people are described as hunters, because their association with water prevented them from eating fish. In other words, they are like the Nguni of South Africa. Thus, in the light of our discoveries in southern Africa, the West Africans referred to as the Gow and "the masters of the water" are two segments of the Dziva Family who appear to have settled in the region separately and at different periods.

For the first time, we actually came across in West Africa a totem that is identical to one that we have noted in southern Africa and this is Sorko. We may remember that the Mutapa Empire was founded by the Soko people after driving out their predecessors who were members of the Dziva-Hungwe Family. Now we find people actually called Sorko establishing the Songhay Empire in West Africa. Furthermore, in southern Africa, these Soko people were "the masters of the land." Here again, what clearly happened was that two segments of Soko people settled in West Africa along the Niger Valley at two different periods. The earlier segment still referred to itself as "the masters of the soil" while the group that migrated into the area later identified itself by the all-encompassing totem, Soko. It is also interesting that the Sorkos are identified as a fisher-folk. They ate fish and this is why they generally settled along the banks of the Niger River. It is also interesting to note that to this day, the Nupe people of Nigeria refer to their God as Soko; the Shona of Zimbabwe also refer to their High Spirit that operated at Njelele at the Matopos as Soko. This is the spirit referred to by many European writers as the Shona God (Mwari). But this High Spirit, as I demonstrated in "From Mutapa to Rhodes" is no more than Murenga Sororenzou, the father of Chaminuka and the grandfather of Mutapa I and Mutapa II who drove the Dziva-Hungwe people out of this country to establish the Soko Mbire Empire in this country. Soko of the Nupe is the greatest ancestor of the Nupe in the way Murenga Sororenzou is the greatest ancestor of the Shona people of Mbire Soko origin. This means that the ancestry of the Nupe is Soko by totem.

In 1972, Ikime wrote a book entitled "A Historical Survey of the Isoko People." That a people still called Soko in Nigeria do exist to this day cannot be doubted. One goes to the extent of wondering whether such towns as Sokoto were named independently of the Soko people of Nigeria. Sokogba in Nigeria means "the axe of Soko;" might Sokoto not also mean "something else of Soko"? Indeed, considering that the Songhay Empire of the Soko people extended to the Niger bend and beyond, are people of Soko origin confined to Nigeria only today? How many tribes in West Africa are of Soko origin but are no longer Soko today?

There is now no reason to doubt that Africa south of the Sahara is populated mainly if not entirely by Bantu people who are members of the three Great Bantu Tribes. The presence and dominance in West Africa of segments of these tribes are irrefutable in the light of the brief examination of Ghana, Mali and Songhay above. This demonstrates the ubiquity in Africa south of the Sahara of members of these Great Bantu Families.

(4) THE CONGO REGION

The Congo region is a vital one for this exercise by virtue of its size and geographical position. Much of Zambia and Angola were colonized by Bantu speaking people from the Congo region. At the same time there is no doubt too that Namibia was colonized by direct off-shoots of Angola and therefore indirect off-shoots of the Congo region.

Therefore, to be able to sort out the regions south of this vast Congo area, the area itself must be sorted out first.

One other thing that makes the Congo region a vital key area is the fact that it was a confluence of Bantu migrants from both the north-east and West Africa. If it can be possible to sort out the Bantu people in this region into the original three Bantu families (Tribes), there can be no doubt that the Bantu migrants from both north-east and West Africa were members of these original Three Tribes. In short, that Bantu Africa is populated by segments of these Three Tribes can be in no doubt.

We have seen the first West African Empire (Ghana) cropping up around 800 A.D. We have also seen the Dziva-Hungwe "Masters of the Water" establishing themselves south of the Zambezi River around 800 A.D. If we cross over to the Congo region, we find I. Kimambo writing, "... the area must have been inhabited by Bantu-speaking people who by 800 A.D. at least lived in organized communities and in some places had already made long-distance trade contacts with the east coast." In other words, Bantu people occupied the Congo region about the same time they occupied West Africa and Southern East Africa. This is so because they radiated from their nucleus area at about the same time and as a result of the same factors.

I have already stated that the first of the Three Great Bantu Families to migrate into the interior of East Africa was the matrilineal Tonga Family. Maps Nos. 5

& 6 show why this was so. Therefore, we should expect segments of the Tonga people to be among the first Bantu migrants to the Congo region. Indeed, there is no doubt that this was so.

In 1482, Diogo Cao, the Portuguese explorer, reached the Congo River and found the area ruled by the Mani (Paramount chief) called Wene and who was a member of the Bantu clan. The arrival of the Portuguese marks the beginning of documented Congolese history. There is no doubt that this first Congolese Empire was matrilineal and therefore of Tonga origins. Again, Kimambo quoted above writes, "The basic unit (of this Congolese state) was the village, which consisted mainly of a localized **matrilineage**. The headmanships were hereditary but no aristocracy existed at this level. ... There was no royal clan. The actual election of a king was done by an electoral college of nine or twelve members. ... There were no clan rules about the succession, and the strength of the state depended too much on the personality of the king." That this describes a typical Tonga community is not in doubt.

If we examine other parts of the Congo region, we are again left in no doubt that the segments of Tonga origins were dominant. The whole plateau north of the Brazzaville, and to the east along both sides of the Kasai River is populated by the Tyo or Teke, the Yans, the Ding, the Boma, the Sakata, the Lele and the Kuba clans. About them, Kimambo again writes "Their political structure is based on small settlements of matrilineal clan sections, which are grouped together into chiefdoms under chiefly clans."

It is not an accident that these people are matrilineal. It is explained by their history as a segment of the Bantu Family complex. There are of course a few minority groups that were acculturated and who tended to change over to a system that originally was not theirs. This is true of the great Mongo family in the same Congo region. This group was originally patrilineal but under the influence of their dominant neighbours (matrilineal), they adopted a dual descent system, e.g. became both patrilineal and matrilineal. But this only emphasizes the dominance of the matrilineal groups in the region which is the fact of greatest interest to us here. It cannot be disputed that the Congo region was originally dominated by groups of Tonga origins.

What all this means is that people of Tonga origin were the vanguards of the Bantu migrants into the interior of Southern Africa. It is a well known fact that the majority of the Bantu migrants into Angola came from the Congo. It is a fact too that the Bantu migrants into Namibia came from Angola. If we examine Namibia today, we find that the Ovambo who are the dominant clan in the north are matrilineal and they have never been known to be anything else. They are thus originally Tonga and they were pushed further south by new migrants from the north. South of them are the Herero who are still semi-matrilineal to this day. The semi-matriliny appears to be accounted for by the influence of the patrilineal Hottentots to the south of them. Namibia is thus a Bantu frontier and is a very good indicator of what Bantu group migrated first from the north, in this case, from the Congo region. Under Zambia, we are

going to see the dominant groups migrating from the Congo again being of Tonga origins and this buttresses the same point. Segments of the Dziva "Masters of the Water" were and are still a very small minority indeed in the region. This is not surprising in view of the fact that the Dziva concentrated on the coastal areas of the east. But one group of Dziva origins is identifiable all the same and this may be of greatest interest to Zimbabwe.

Around 1 500, there were many small chiefdoms between Lake Tanganyika and the Upper Kasai. Abutting the Upper Kasai were the Bungo; to the east of them in the centre were the Kaniok and the Bena Kalundwe; to the far east and next to Lake Tanganyika were small chiefdoms whose inhabitants were called the KALANGA people.

South of the Zambezi River, the Kalanga people are well-known to be segments of the Dziva "Masters of the Water." These people are known to have been the first Bantu inhabitants of Mozambique and Zimbabwe. We have seen them above being driven into South Africa and Botswana by the Mbire invaders who established the Mutapa Empire. In Zimbabwe today, we still have a large section in Western Matabeleland who are to this day called KALANGA. It is not surprising that they are at the western border because this is the region to which they were driven by the Mbire invaders. The original Kalanga in Zimbabwe were all associated with water and are still so to this day. In Western Matabeleland, they include the Ziziba, the Kweni, the Ngwenya and the Nyoni. The Ncubes and Moyos in the same region who are also classified as Kalanga are acculturated Mbire "Masters of the Land." It is their ancestors who drove the Kalanga Masters of the Water further to the West and intermingled with them.

The Southern part of Zimbabwe is today called Karanga. This is not different from Kalanga of Western Matabeleland. Again, it is interesting to note that the application of the word is confined to the south, the very area to which the original Kalanga occupants of this country were driven by the Mbire invaders. Today, these people are still confined to the south including South Africa. In Southern Zimbabwe, their dominant clan is that of Matibi who is Dziva Mbedzi. They also include the Twamamba and the Tavatsinde most of whom are in Mberengwa (Belingwe). In the Chipinge area, their main representative is Musikavanhu whose mutupo is Mlambo (Hippo) and still associated with water.

The Portuguese went to the extent of referring to the whole of Zimbabwe as the Karanga Empire. This was so because the country was originally occupied by a segment of the KALANGA people. Thus the Mbire invaders who established the Mutapa Empire captured the country of the Kalanga and referred to it as the Kalanga country but were at the same time quick to call it Mbire after their own tribal name.

The existence of Kalanga clans in the Congo area and in Zimbabwe around 1 500 A.D. cannot be an accident especially in view of our unfolding inter-

relationships all over Bantu Africa. The existence of the Kalanga clans in the Congo region is evidence of the presence there of segments of the Dziva Masters of the water but in a small minority.

Let us now look for evidence of the Soko Masters of the Land in the same Congo region. We have already discovered that the Sokos were the last to leave the Nile Valley around 640 A.D. It was they who pushed the Dziva and the Tonga both west and south. In West Africa, we saw them founding the Songhay Empire after the Ghana and Mali Empires. In Southern Africa, we saw them establishing the Mutapa Empire after driving the Dziva Masters of the Water both south and west. Do segments of these people exist in the Congo?

One authority answers this very directly, "The Soko of the Congo-Aruwini confluence are shorter, averaging 63¾ inches, and verge upon and perhaps reach brachycephally All these tribes are of the Congo proper." (1) Thus the existence of groups that are still Soko in the Congo region today is a historical fact. But how many groups were Soko in the area but are no longer Soko today?

The reader must be reminded that the Sokos were the "Masters of the Land." In West Africa, we saw them being called "The Masters of the Soil." In Southern Africa, they were called "The Masters of the Land." The Shona of Zimbabwe call them "Vana Vevhu" meaning the "Children or Sons of the Soil." If we cross over to the Congo, we find Kimambo quoted earlier writing, "A number of chiefdoms were ruled by lineages known as 'owners of the land'." These were hereditary. Others were ruled by officials appointed either by a superior chief or by the king." This is further evidence of the presence of "Masters of the Land" in the Congo region and all of whom were originally Soko.

Let us now move on to the Luba-Lunda Empire, the most extensive and most powerful of the Central African Empires. The most well-known names in Luba history are Kongolo and Kalala. This is so because these two are the founders of the Luba Empire which in turn founded the Lunda Empire covering parts of the Congo and Zambia.

Kongolo settled in the Kalanga area west of Lake Tanganyika and that we have come across above. This was around 1 500 and he was then coming from the north-east, i.e. area of the Great Lakes. He subdued the Kalanga chiefdoms and made the beginnings of the Luba Empire. A man called Ilunga MBILI, also coming from the north-east, visited Kongolo and married two of his half-sisters. One of these half sisters gave birth to a son called Kalala Ilunga and the other gave birth also to a son called Kisulu Mabele.

Kalala Ilunga ultimately fought Kongolo, defeated him and took over his chiefdom. It was he who extended the Luba chiefdom to convert it into the Luba Empire. But he was the son of Ilunga Mbili. The chiefdoms created by

1, C. G. Seligman, *The Races of Africa*, p. 133.

him were patrilineal therefore not of Tonga origins. About it, Kimambo writes, "The Society (Luba) was organized in patrilineages; one or more formed a village, directed by a headman chosen from the main lineage . . .". Secondly, in Southern Africa, Ilunga means, "a segment", "a section", "a portion" of. MBILI means Mbire that we have come across in the past and this was a reference to the descendants of MBILI, the ancestor of the Soko segments that trekked from the Nile Valley towards the south. In "From Mutapa to Rhodes", I quoted Mbire which was all the time referred to as MBILI and the Mbire people referred to as the "Ba-MBILI", e.g. by David Livingstone. Ilunga therefore means "a segment" of the Mbire, "a branch of the Mbire", "a descendant of the Mbire" and this immediately links him up with the Soko Masters of the Land.

Thirdly, right through the text, I have stressed that the last of the Bantu Great Families to leave the area of the Great Lakes were the Soko Masters of the Land and for reasons already given. Therefore, those migrants of the period around 1 500 from the area of the Great Lakes were most likely to be segments of the Sokos. Considered from these angles therefore, Ilunga Mbili, father of Kalala, was a member of the Soko Family.

Because the Luba Empire was founded by Kalala, it was therefore an empire of a segment of the Masters of the Land. That the Lunda Empire was an offshoot of the Luba Empire of Kalala has never been doubted. Therefore, the Lunda Empire itself was a Kingdom created by a segment of the Masters of the Land who were originally Soko. Lunda traditions make it clear that they came from the north and that they were associated with the Masters of the Land. Kimambo again writes, "From this area, groups . . . have broken off and settled in the plains on the west under "CHIEFS OF THE LAND." This again links us up with the Sokos.

The Lunda Empire was created by Cibinda who was the son of Kalala and brother Ilunga Walwefu. Cibinda migrated from the Luba territory and was ultimately to found his own kingdom in the south. The Kazambes, the Lunda Paramounts, were his descendants. By 1 800, his empire covered the Katanga area of the Congo region and parts of Zambia. The Luba-Lunda Paramount chief in the Luba area was then known as the Mwata Yamvo. The Lunda Paramount who up to a point recognized the seniority of the Mwata Yamvo was then called the Kazembe. Thus the whole Luba-Lunda Empire was an empire of the segments of the Masters of the Land who were originally Soko. That the Congo region was and is still populated by segments of the Tonga, the Mbire Masters of the Land and to a small extent, the Dziva Masters of the Water, is indisputable. But this is exactly what we find everywhere else in Africa.

(5) ZAMBIA

Lastly, let us cross over to Zambia and briefly analyse the position there. When we examined the Bantu migrations south of the Great Lakes around 900 A.D.,

we found that the area south of Lake Tanganyika and west of Lake Malawi was populated by the matrilineal Tonga and whose tribal name was Tonga. These people were invaded by the Mbire Soko people around 900 A.D. and were driven to the south mainly. As they approached the Zambezi River, they diverted up stream and kept on trekking up it. Inevitably, they were the first Bantu people to occupy all southern Zambia right up to Livingstone.

Andrew Roberts writing about these Tonga people says, " . . . there is archaeological evidence which suggests that the ancestors of the Tonga had settled in their present country by about A.D. 1 100." Indeed, this cannot be far out considering that they were driven away from the east around 900 A.D. There is thus no doubt that the Tonga were the first Bantu migrants to settle in southern Zambia. This in itself means that they were the vanguards of the interior Bantu migrants to the south. Today, segments that are still Tonga constitute between 22% and 25% of the population of Zambia. But as we are going to see shortly, many more segments of the same Family who migrated into the country from the Congo area and who are no longer called Tonga, are dominant in Zambia. It would not be too much to say that between 40% and 50% of the population of Zambia consists of people of Tonga origin. To quote only a few, the Bemba, the Lamba, the Bisa, and the Kaonde are all matrilineal and are known to have migrated from the Congo area. The Lozi and the Ila are also matrilineal. Thus Zambia is a predominantly Tonga country.

The Masters of the Water are a small minority but are identifiable in Zambia. We can start off with the most recent migrants, the Angoni who are largely in the Fort Jameson area. These are known to be a segment of the South African Nguni who migrated across the Zambezi under Zwangendaba. They are originally Dziva and therefore members of the Masters of the Water. In addition to these, throughout Zambia today, you come across communities that are known as MVULA or MFULA. This means "water" and in our larger African context, it means DZIVA. Thus groups closely associated with water are still found in Zambia today. Admittedly, they are a small minority but they are there. That they should be a small minority should not be surprising. The majority of their segments were far to the east coast and did not find it easy to migrate to the interior. Their segments in the Congo area were also a small minority. Naturally, only small segments of them spilled into Zambia.

Members of Soko Masters of the Land are also easily identifiable in Zambia. They migrated into the country from two main directions, the east and the north. Between 900 and 1 000 A.D. the area west of Lake Malawi was invaded by the Sokos who proceeded to found the Mutapa Empire south of the Zambezi River as we have seen. In the whole way between Lake Tanganyika and the Zambezi River, they left behind their cousins. The most well-known of them are the Phiri. To this day, the Sokos in Zimbabwe look upon the Phiri people as their cousins. They look upon the totem Phiri as identical to the Shona totem Soko, meaning monkey.

After 1 000 A.D., these Phiri people started to migrate slowly to the west to

occupy Eastern Zambia. They are members of the Great Soko Tribe traditionally known as the Masters of the Land.

From the north, more segments of the Masters of the Land migrated into Zambia. North of Zambia is Zaire. Earlier, we saw Cibinda, son of Ilunga Kalala, migrating from the Luba kingdom to found the Lunda kingdom. He was a member of the Masters of the Land. His descendants established the paramountcy of Kazembe. In due course, this Lunda Empire of Kazembe occupied parts of the Congo region and the area between the Luapula and the Luangwa Valleys in Zambia. Today, the Lunda are as much a feature of Zaire as of Zambia. These were originally part of the Soko Family and therefore, Masters of the Land. It looks too as if the Mambwe, the Nyamwanga and the Iwa are segments of the Masters of the Land. These appear to have migrated from Tanganyika. They are patrilineal too.

Thus here again, Zambia is no exception. It is dominated by communities of Tonga origins. Those originating from the Soko Master of the Land are quite sizeable. Members of the Dziva Masters of the Water are there but are a small minority. Zambia, like Zaire, is ethnically a microcosm of Bantu Africa. But what African country is not?

Bantu commingling with non-Negro people to create new races has taken place almost everywhere in Africa. We have seen descendants of Moor traders and Portuguese in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Both the Arabs and Portuguese influenced the whole east coast of Africa. The Arabs conquered and are still largely in control of north Africa, penetrating into West Africa; the Portuguese traded with West Africa; they developed a considerable interest in the Congo region and were to spread their influence into Angola in the seventeenth century. In all these regions, both the Arabs and the Portuguese intermingled with Africans and new tribes were created as in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. There is virtually no state in Africa that is unique in terms of ethnic structure.

To conclude these first four chapters, let us look back and see what has emerged. We have seen the African race emerging in the Nile Valley in Egypt. Gradually the Negroes who were born out of the commingling of the Hamites with the Bushmen drifted towards the south to the first cataract. As the population of Egypt grew, these Negroes pushed further south and created the Kingdoms given such names as Azania and Nubia. Ultimately, they established the famous Kingdom of Kush which colonized all of Africa south of the Sahara.

Before the Bantu Explosion culminated in the emergence of Bantu Africa, some of the Negro people started to drift away from Kush towards both the west and the south. These early African migrants from the Nile Valley were the ancestors of the people today called the "true Negroes." They left the Nile Valley before the civilization of Kush, which was later to influence all Africa south of the Sahara, had reached fruition. As the Bantu Explosion started after 600 A.D., the "true Negroes" who had left the Nile Valley earlier were pushed both towards the south and west. Those in small pockets were completely

absorbed by the Bantu. Those who were in more sizeable concentrations such as in West Africa maintained threads of their identity and may still be identifiable to this day.

The Bantu are clearly divided into what I have called the three Great Bantu families. The spiritual authorities of the Shona, who are at the same time the earliest ancestors of the Shona, suggested that these three Great Bantu Tribes descended from one man who had three wives. Other scholars have not failed to see three ancient tribes in Africa. For instance, Delafosse "thought that these Senufu (people of the Tassili region in the Sahara Desert) were one of the three indigenous peoples whom the migrants from the east and north-east had found in possession of the land." (19)

After the creation of the three Great Bantu Families, any migrants from the Nile Valley were bound to consist of representatives of all three. One group might be dominant in a particular migration in the sense that it provided the ruling House, but elements of the other two in sub-ordinate positions were most likely to be present. There was no one wave of migration from the Nile Valley; they must have taken place both before and after the Great Bantu Explosion after 600 A.D. But each wave, regardless of which of the three Great Bantu Families ruled it was bound to contain segments of all three Great Bantu Families. Therefore, although Delafosse talks of "three indigenous peoples" found by the migrants to the Tassili area, the migrants themselves must have consisted of segments of the same three.

In 738 A.D., there was an interesting report from Walib ibn Munabbih. "The descendants of the posterity of Kush, who was the son of Ham and the grandson of Noah, include the peoples of the Sudan: and these are the Qaran, the Zaghawa, the Habesha, the Qibt and the Barbar." (20) In 947 A.D., El Masudi, completed his "Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems". In it he wrote, "When the descendants of Noah spread across the earth, the sons of Kush, the son of Canaan, travelled toward the west and crossed the Nile. There, they separated: some of them, the **Nubians** and the **Beja** and the **Zanji**, turned to the rightward, between the east and the west: but the others, very numerous, marched toward the setting sun . . .".

El Masudi mentions three groups again, the Nubians, the Beja and the Zanji. He goes on to say that the Zanji "elected a king whom they called Waglimi. This name . . . was that of their kings from time immemorial." He adds that the Zanji under this king, operated around Sofala. There is evidence of what was called the Zenji Empire being destroyed by the Portuguese of Vasco da Gama in 1498. We now know that the people who operated south of the Zambezi River around 900 A.D. were the Dziva-Hungwe people. Therefore, the people called the Zanj by El Masudi and "Who persevered in making their way into the far south beyond the upper waters of the Nile" must of necessity be the Dziva-Hungwe people whose descendants we have already seen in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, Botswana and South Africa.

But if the Zanj were definitely the Dziva-Hungwe people, might the Beja mentioned by Masudi not be the Tonga whom we know to have been behind the Dziva-Hungwe people from the north? If so, might the Nubians mentioned by Masudi not be the Mbire Soko who were behind the Tonga from the north? In view of the unfolding of early African history that we are witnessing here, these are pertinent questions. The important point again is that the early travellers were able to detect the existence in Africa of three identifiable groups of Africans. My impression is that the Beja were the people we referred to in this book as the Tonga and the Nubians were the Mbire Soko.

We have also seen Masudi saying that the "others, very numerous, marched toward the setting sun." This means that more of these people migrated towards the west from the Nile Valley. It was they who created the empires of Ghana, Mali and Songhay: this proves beyond any doubt that the reports of these early Arab travellers carry historical facts.

The most exciting statement by both ibn Man'abbeh and El Masudi is that these people descended from Kush, the son of Canaan and grandson of Noah. In view of what we have noted throughout Africa south of the Sahara, we cannot afford to regard this as a mere legend. The Shona spiritual authorities have stated in categorical terms that the Bantu descended from one man and segmented into three families; the existence of these three families in Africa is irrefutable. The Bantu certainly came from one corner of Africa in the Nile Valley: the existence of a kingdom called Kush, that has had enormous influence on Africa, is unquestionable; that many kingdoms and tribes were named after the founding ancestors such as we have seen in both southern Africa and West Africa is undeniable too. The possibility therefore that the Kingdom of Kush was named after the man who first colonized it and who is the ancestor of the Bantu, is very great.

Many communities in Africa were named after an ancestor older than the founding ancestors of those particular communities. We have come across the Venda of South Africa giving themselves the totem Ndou (elephant) after their greatest known ancestor (also the ancestor of the Shona), Sorore-nzou, who died centuries before the Venda formed an independent community in both Zimbabwe and the Transvaal. We have found them naming their Bantustan capital Thoyo ya Ndou (Sororenzou) more than a thousand years after the death of Murenga Sororenzou. So we cannot calculate the age of Kush the ancestor from the time Kush the Kingdom came into existence. It is possible that Kush is the first Negro man ever. Certainly he was a very central figure in the early history of black Africa.

Kush the kingdom was certainly in existence by the year 800 B.C. and possibly as early as 1 000 B.C. Therefore the historical Kush existed between 1 000 and 800 B.C. or was long dead. The three major segments — the three Great Bantu Families — multiplied and grew in strength. Admittedly, some branches of these Great Families left the Nile Valley long before the Great Bantu Explosion of the period after 600 A.D. These are the Africans we called Negroes but not

Bantu. This is so because they left Kush before the major characteristics of Kushite civilization, including language and Christianity, had developed. Those who remained in the Nile Valley and were to start large scale migrations after 600 A.D. had been fully subjected to all the facets of Kushite civilization that included Christianity and a special language associated with the Kingdom. It is these Africans, we here call Bantu.

All this suggests that the father of all the Negroes might be Kush: their grandfather might be Canaan; their great grandfather might be Noah. These names must have a historical origin and that origin must be associated with the ancestry of the Bantu and all the Negroes. That Africa is a "colony" of the Kingdom of Kush cannot logically be rejected. But the Kingdom of Kush itself was a "colony" of Egypt. It is therefore not inaccurate to describe black Africa as historically and culturally a "child of Egypt." The remaining chapters of this book will demonstrate this from the cultural angle.

CHAPTER 5

THE UNITY OF BANTU AFRICA

"Lineages and clans, representing the Kingship system, and villages and districts, representing the territorial setting, form the basis of the social-political structure of societies in the Western Sudan. Above this level one should take account of the ethnic groups which may be described as 'nations'. Each of these nations had in common language, history, customs, religion and a territory. . . . -A nation is formed by different clans which fall into different categories of status: nobles, freemen, castemen, serfs and slaves. The political history is generally that of the noble clans, and the process of state building is that of one noble clan asserting its authority over other groups and over the territories they occupy. The dominant clan then became the wealthiest by drawing from the resources of its subjects." (21)

What Levtzion says above is valid for all Bantu Africa. He is describing the situation in West Africa. This in itself shows the extent to which Africa is a unit in political and social structure. We cannot argue that there are no differences between one region of Africa and the next, or even between neighbouring communities: differences there are and ought to be. But despite them, there is remarkable unity in all Bantu Africa. A unity that is more striking than the differences.

The differences have come about as a result of geographical factors and separate political, economic and social development. The Africans in West Africa parted with their cousins in southern Africa more than a thousand years ago. The so-called "true Negroes" in West Africa must have lost links with their cousins in Southern Africa at least two thousand years ago. The geographical factors that influenced them all the way from the Nile Valley to West Africa were different from those that influenced their cousins who migrated to Southern Africa; the cultural influences to which they were subjected over all these centuries were different from those that influenced their cousins in southern Africa or Equatorial Africa for that matter; the leaders who made their history were different in initiative and capability from those that made the histories of their cousins elsewhere in Africa. The remarkable degree of unity and similarity between various regions and communities is partly explained by the conservative rigidity of traditional societies and partly by the stubborn tenacity of African traditional religion. At the same time, it demonstrates how strongly ingrained were the different facets of the Nile Valley civilization of which the Africans themselves were a product. It strengthens the argument that all the Bantu people came from the same corner of Africa and were all subject to the same cultural influences before the Bantu Explosion of the seventh century.

Before we analyse the common traits of Africa under different headings, let us for a moment examine the claims of Africans in vastly separated regions in respect of their origins. These claims to common origins explain this "Bantu unity": if they had no foundation, then that unity would not be there.

The ancestors of the Shona of Zimbabwe claimed that they came from the Sudan through Ethiopia. They went to the extent of suggesting that the three Great Bantu Families descended from one man in the Nile Valley. Thus, the Shona of Zimbabwe are in no doubt at all that they came from north-east Africa. When we examined the Kwena and the Nguni of Botswana and South Africa, we found them making exactly the same claim; we found them even talking of their common traits with the Jews or people of Jewish origin. They pointed to north-east Africa as their original home after the fashion of the Shona. This is interesting especially if we realize that the Kwena and Nguni in Botswana did not really live together with the ancestors of the Shona after the initial parting in North-East Africa. They are where they are today because they ran away from their invaders who created the Mutapa Empire. So the Kwena and Nguni on one hand, and the Shona on the other, could not have influenced the thinking of the other since they lived apart. Yet they are making exactly the same claims in regard to their original homes.

Let us now cross over to the whole Sudan Belt. As we are going to see most of the migrants from the Nile Valley headed for the Lake Chad area and dispersed into West Africa. One authority sums up the traditions of the West African peoples in the following terms, — "There is practically no well-known people in West Africa without a legend of an eastern or a northern origin in the remote past. Some of these traditions are complete enough to enable an intelligent guess at their approximate date. Thus Biobaku has felt able to suggest that the founders of Yoruba civilization in southern Nigeria reached their country between the seventh and tenth centuries A.D., coming from the middle Nile." (22) To the east of Lake Chad was the empire of Kanem, which was succeeded by the Empire of Bornu. About them, the same authority writes, "To the east, moreover, there was Kanem, largest of many states that would emerge in the wide grasslands which run between the Niger and the Nile, and with Bornu its successor, longest lived of all the states of the Sudan. Its origins, going back to the same remote period as the origins of Songhay, also inter-weave by tradition with the arrival of migrant peoples from the east and north-east. And tradition is easy to believe in this case, for these old trails from the valley of the Nile must have known many who fled from the wars and invasions set going successively by the collapse of Kush and the conquests of Axum and the coming of the Arabs." (23) These are summaries of the oral traditions of the Africans in the Sudan Belt from West Africa to the region east of Lake Chad. All indications point to the Nile Valley as their original home. This is precisely what we found the Africans in southern Africa saying. Are all these Africans in widely separated regions and who parted more than a thousand years ago, conspiring to tell the same story of their origins in north-east Africa? What would be their motive and what would they profit from it? Alternatively, should we dismiss it as coincidence?

Before we consider the cultural traits of these Bantu migrants, let us examine the time southern Africa was occupied by these migrants. I have stated clearly that the Dziva-Hungwe people, the first Bantu people to settle south of the

Zambezi River, were already in Zimbabwe by the year 800 A.D. I expressed the feeling that they might have settled in the region around the year 750 A.D. We came across Arab documents referring to the Zanj Empire ruled by a king called Waqlimi, who controlled the region around Sofala before the year 1 000. I made it clear that this was a reference to the Dziva-Hungwe people, the only Bantu people south of the Zambezi then.

Around the year 1 000 A.D., we saw the Mbire Soko people, "the masters of the land" crossing the Zambezi River and invading the Dziva-Hungwe Family, "the masters of the water", and driving them to the south and west where they colonized South Africa and Botswana. The invaders then established, between the Zambezi and the Limpopo, the famous Mutapa Empire. This was around the year 1 000, as archaeologists have established.

Now let us return to West Africa and see when the first known empires appeared in that region.

Above, we noted Biobaku suggesting "that the founders of Yoruba civilization in southern Nigeria reached their country between the seventh and the tenth centuries A.D., coming from the middle Nile." Lebeuf, talking about the Sao people of the Lake Chad area, "puts the date of their arrival in the Chad region at not long before the tenth century A.D." About the same Sao people, Urvoy pushes the date back and "regards them as being firmly settled on the east bank of Lake Chad by the eighth century as well as possibly in the savannah country to the north of Chad." To this, Davidson add, "Again one sees, here (East Africa) as in West Africa, that it is the second half of the first millenium A.D. — the period, let us say, between 500 and 1 000 A.D. — which is crucial to the study of later African development." This same authority remarks on the findings of Huntingford concerning Kenya and Tanganyika and says, "Huntingford has suggested an early dating limit of about A.D. 700 or somewhat earlier, for the beginning of this stone-building, metal-using agricultural civilization of Kenya and Tanganyika."

If we turn to the earliest empire that is known to have existed in West Africa, the Ghana Empire, we also find it coming into existence at about the same time. The first mention of it is made by the Arab traveller, El Fazari, just after 800 A.D. and he called it "the land of gold". The second Arab traveller to mention it was Kwarizmi around 833 A.D. and he went to the extent of marking it on the map.

What emerges clearly from this exercise is that Bantu Africa was born between 600 and 1 00 A.D. The occupation of the continent by Africans with a knowledge of iron-working and building in stone and originating from the Nile Valley took place after 600 A.D. and was nearly complete by the year 1 000 A.D. As far as West Africa was concerned, Bantu occupation was complete by the year 1 000; in southern Africa, there was still room south of the Limpopo River; nevertheless, Bantu Africa was in existence by the year 1 000 A.D. "If the present peoples of continental Africa began to multiply from rarity some 4 000 or 5 000 years ago

or less, it appears that only in comparatively recent times — perhaps within the last 1 000 or 1 500 years — have they become really numerous and spread across the continent and acquired the strength they have today.” (24)

This is probably the most remarkable feature of Bantu Africa. Africans are well-known to have been in existence on the continent by the year 5 000 B.C. Yet by the year 100 A.D. they had not multiplied dramatically. More interesting still, they had not left the Nile Valley to occupy the rest of the continent. But all of a sudden, they radiated from the Nile Valley after 600 A.D. and, in the next four hundred years, Bantu Africa was born. If we examine the history of the Nile Valley between 300 A.D. and 700, there are two dramatic events that must account for this dramatic sudden explosion of the Africans that I have described here as the Bantu Explosion and these are the conquest of Kush by Axum after 300 A.D. and the conquest of the area by Moslems after the death of Mohammed but before 700 A.D. In the light of the analysis of Bantu migrations that we have just examined above, both events are important but the Moslem conquest of Egypt and the neighbourhood after 630 A.D. appears to be by far the most important. We do not seem to know enough about the details of this Moslem conquest of Egypt and her neighbourhood but its effect on the Kushites and their neighbours was certainly dramatic.

We have noted practically all the African regions claiming origins in the Nile Valley in North-East Africa; we have seen the mighty explosion there that sent shattered and shattering fragments to the regions west and south of the Nile Valley, thereby bringing Bantu Africa into existence in the next four hundred years; we now need to examine the common cultural traits of these fragments from the Nile Valley.

(1) LINGUISTIC EVIDENCE

The Africans called Bantu are so-called because they speak a related group of languages. The term Bantu itself is simply the plural of MUNTU meaning person or human being. BANTU or Aba-ntu means no more than “people”. While the prefix changes depending on whether the subject of the sentence is singular or plural, or depending on the class of the noun that forms the subject of the sentence, the stem remains constant. For instance,

Ba - NTU	or	Aba - NTU	=	people or human beings
Mu - NHU	or	Mu - NTU	=	person or human being
Chi - NHU	or	Isi - NTU	=	a thing
Zvi - NHU	or	Izi - NTU	=	things
Ka - NHU	or	Ka - NTU	=	small thing

Where Bantu (people) is the subject of the sentence, the prefix “ba” keeps on reappearing at the beginning of every noun or adjective in that sentence. Here is an example in Shona:—

Va - nhu va - ngu va - kuru va - kauya va - kaona va - kakunda

My great people came and saw and conquered.

In old Shona orthography, “v” was represented by “b”. According to that old orthography, the above sentence should read:—

Ba - nhu ba - ngu ba - kuru ba - kauya ba - kaona ba - kakunda

In Sindebele and any of the Suthu and Nguni languages, the sentence is:—

Aba - ntu ba - mi aba - dala ba - buya ba - bona ba - ngoba

Those who decided to call us Ba - NTU were impressed by the recurrence of this prefix “ba” in any given sentence in which “person” or “human being” is the subject. They then combined the “ba” or “aba” with the constant stem “NTU” to form Ba - ntu or Aba - ntu and this simply means “people”. By virtue of this, Doctor Bleek referred to us as the “Bantu language group of peoples” simply meaning the people in whose languages the prefix “Ba” and the stem “NTU” keeps on recurring in the sentence as shown above. From this and this alone, we became known as the Bantu people.

But the question is, do we speak a related group of languages by accident? How can it be that people in West Africa, thousands of miles away from those in southern Africa, speak languages similar to those in the southern tip of the continent? Are we to suppose that possibly there was a community that marched through West and Equatorial Africa, conquering the inhabitants and inculcating elements of its language into the regions through which it passed? Such a group has never been known to exist on this continent. We speak a related group of languages because we have a common origin and a common ancestor. We are Kushites and the group of languages we speak is a Kushitic group of languages.

In spite of our different histories and our different environments after the initial parting in north-east Africa, our languages are still similar to this day. The following table should help in demonstrating this.

CLAN/AREA	COUNTRY	WORD	MEANING
The Kulung	Nigeria	Yamba	God
The Piya	Nigeria	Yamba	God
The Pero	Nigeria	Yamba	God
The Tagale	Nigeria	Yamba	God
The Waja	Nigeria	Yamba	God
The Cameroons	Cameroon	Yambe/Yembe	God
The Congo	Zaire	Yambe/Yembe	God
The Akan	Ghana	Nyame/Onyame	God
The Ashanti	Ghana	Nyame/Onyame	God
The Shona	Zimbabwe	Yabe/Yave	God
The Nupe	Nigeria	Egba	axe
The Shona	Zimbabwe	Hubga	battle axe

CLAN/AREA	COUNTRY	WORD	MEANING
The Swahili	East Africa	Nyumba	house
The Nyanja	Malawi	Nyumba	house
The Shona	Zimbabwe	Imba	house
The Swahili	East Africa	umba	mould
The Shona	Zimbabwe	umba	mould
The Bemba	Zambia	Mfula	water
The Nyanja	Malawi	Mvula	water
The Shona	Zimbabwe	Mvura	water
The Xosa	South Africa	Mvula	water
The Chewa	Malawi	Anadya	he ate
The Shona	Zimbabwe	Anodya	he eats
The Bungu	Tanzania	Izimungala	forest spirit
The Kimbu	Tanzania	Imadimungala	forest spirit
West Africa	West Africa	Idimungala	forest spirit
The Shona	Zimbabwe	Dzimudzangara	forest spirit
The Nyanja	Malawi	Akazi	women
The Xosa	South Africa	Abafazi	women
The Shona	Zimbabwe	Vakadzi	women
The Kimbu	Tanzania	Mwaana	son
The Shona	Zimbabwe	Mwana	child
The Kimbu	Tanzania	Impungu	eagle
The Shona	Zimbabwe	Chapungu	hawk eagle
The Swahili	East Africa	Imbeva	rat
The Nyanja	Malawi	Imbeva	rat
The Shona	Zimbabwe	Mbeva	mouse
The Gusii	Tanzania	Erioba	sun
The Mbungwe	Tanzania	Djuwa	sun
The Pare	Tanzania	Izuva	sun
The Isangu	Tanzania	Dyioba	sun

CLAN/AREA	COUNTRY	WORD	MEANING
The Iramba	Tanzania	Nzua	sun
The Gogo	Tanzania	Inzua	sun
The Meru	Tanzania	Iruva	sun
The Turu	Tanzania	Yuva	sun
The Pimbwe	Tanzania	Limi	sun
The Nyamwezi	Tanzania	Lime	sun
The Haya	Tanzania	Eizooba	sun
The Ganda	Uganda	Enjuba	sun
The Amkole	Uganda	Eizooba	sun
The Kiga	Uganda	Eizooba	sun
The Nyoro	Uganda	Eizooba	sun
The Shona	Zimbabwe	Zuba/Zuva	sun

While I am no philologist, a glance at the words above is enough to convince anyone that our languages are very similar and must have a common origin. Realizing that almost all the communities that speak those languages are hundreds, and in many cases thousands of miles apart and have been apart for well over a thousand years, this is indeed remarkable and cannot be assigned to the realm of coincidence. The variations must be a result of the foreign cultural influences to which each community was subjected after parting with its cousin — communities way back in north-east Africa. Cultures evolve and this includes language. The Shona language has greatly evolved; for instance, it has lost the letter "L" and in every case, has replaced it with "r". The Nguni and Suthu languages have been very much influenced by the Khoisan languages from which they have borrowed the "clicks". In other words, every Bantu language has evolved over the past centuries as a result of the various foreign influences impinging on it. In spite of this, the similarities are clear and are explained by our common origins way back in the Nile Valley.

All this makes it very clear that the term Bantu has no ethnic connotations whatever. The Kushitic language itself was not static. It also evolved as a result of cultural developments taking place within the Kushite kingdom. It evolved as a result of foreign influences that came from Egypt, from the Eastern Mediterranean area and from the Arab world. By 600 A.D., and largely as a result of this evolution and the impact of foreign influences, the Kushitic language had acquired definite features of its own. Because the Africans we today call 'Bantu' were a component part of the Kushite community, they inevitably acquired those features of the Kushitic language and this accounts for the similarities in the Bantu languages.

Those African peoples who left the Nile Valley, let us say before 300 A.D. are not likely to have been speaking the Kushite language as it had developed by 600 A.D. Such Africans do not fall under the term Bantu and are what are generally called by anthropologists "true Negroes." We have mentioned one other important aspect of the Kushite civilization of 600 A.D. that they did not have, and this was Christianity. Thus, although the "true Negroes" were of Kush, they were not of the Kushites of 600 A.D.

(2) EGYPTIAN "PAGAN" RELIGION

The unity of Bantu Africa can be demonstrated from far more than the linguistic angle. Although I have stated that the ancestors of the Bantu were Christian, evidence of the "pagan" religion of Egypt is clear. This means that Christianity was superimposed on the ancient religion of Egypt of which Kush was a province earlier. Christianity did not destroy elements of this Egyptian religion, just as Christianity did not destroy all elements of our traditional religion during the colonial era. The presence within the Bantu culture of aspects of this ancient Egyptian religion is in itself evidence of our Egyptian origins.

It is well-known that the ancient Egyptians worshipped the sun or God of the Sun. This God was called Amun and was symbolized by the ram. Both the sun and the ram not only featured in ancient Bantu traditions but still feature prominently in our religious traditions to this day. I have taken the Shona of Zimbabwe as "a case study", partly because I can claim a thorough knowledge of these people of which I am a member and partly because the Shona are only a segment of the people in southern Africa in general, Mozambique, Botswana and South Africa. By covering the early traditions of Zimbabwe we will have largely covered those of Mozambique, Botswana and South Africa as well. Let us therefore examine the earliest ancestors of these people.

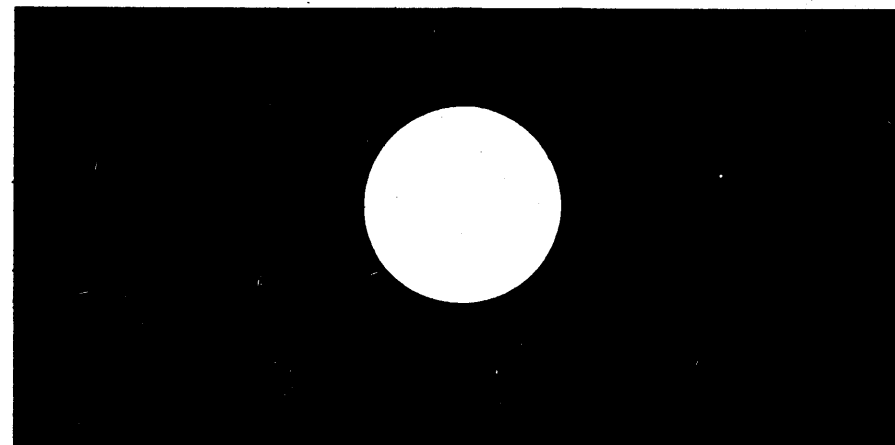
The greatest ancestral spirits of the Shona are called "Majukwa". All are national spirits and are above the status of regional spirits, called "Regional Mhondoros". They are national because they lived and ruled when the Mbire Soko Family was one family ruled by one man. This was before the tribal segmentation and fragmentation of the period after 1 500 A.D. which I discussed in "From Mutapa to Rhodes." The MAJUKWA are the Shona equivalent to the West African Divinities. They are looked upon as nearest to God and they intercede between God and man. The greatest of the active Shona ancestral spirits in this country is Murenga Sororengou. He is the spirit that operated from Njelele at the Matopos in 1896 and who called for the liberation war of that year which, in consequence, was given his name Chimurenga. Until my own researches became known, European scholars have been calling him MWARI (GOD), The Hamitoid Mbire High God, the Shona High Spirit, the God of the Matopos and the like; he was never considered as an ancestor at all.

The next of the active Shona ancestral spirits is Chaminuka who is the greatest of the active mhondoros. But Chaminuka has an active sister too, the famous Nehanda. He also has two brothers, Runji and Mushavatu. The dominant personalities below these are Mutapa I and Mutapa II. Those who read "From Mutapa to Rhodes" may remember that these Mutapas were both sons of Chaminuka. The names of Mutapa I are Kutamadzoka, Mabwemashava, Mutuisinazita and those of Mutapa II are Chigwangu Rusvingo. We also come across the father of Murenga Sororengou and this was Tovera. His own father was Mambiri after whom the Soko segment that migrated to the south was named — Mbire — and after whom the country was also called Mbire.

We know very little about Mambiri because he does not seem to have ever become an active spiritual force in this country. Possibly he followed some of his descendants who went elsewhere in Africa. But Tovera, Murenga, Chaminuka, Nehanda, Mabwemashava and Rusvingo have been closely associated with the affairs of Zimbabwe and are the greatest active ancestors of the Shona. All were associated, as human beings, with the regions north of the Zambezi River. Tovera might actually have migrated from Ethiopia to Kenya. On the other hand, Mabwemashava and Rusvingo are also associated as human beings with Zimbabwe for the reason that it was they who drove out the Dziva-Hungwe people and colonized it.

Because the great ancestors of the Shona are the ones who left the Nile Valley for the south, they are more closely associated with the cultural traits of that Nile Valley than their descendants. Examination of their regalia is very revealing. All cover themselves with black materials that have white circular patches in the centre and are about eight inches or so in diameter. Today, they demand that their mediums put on black shirts or dresses with white circular patches both in front and at the back. The following diagram shows an example of these materials: —

Diagram of Jukwa material



These white circular patches represent the sun and symbolize their association with the Sun God of Egypt.

The Sun God of Egypt was symbolized with a ram. Those who read "From Mutapa To Rhodes" may remember that one of the demands of all these great Shona ancestral spirits was a ram. One ram was dedicated to Tovera: one to Murenga: one to Chaminuka: one to Mabwemashava (Mutapa I) and one to Rusvingo (Mutapa II). I do not know of any younger Shona spirit to whom a ram has ever been dedicated. This must be because, as we progress to younger generations that are further and further away from these great ancestors, the links of these generations with Kush and Egypt become more and more tenuous. The Sun God ceases to be a factor. In the rest of the Shona world today, the sheep is more associated with witches than with good ancestral spirits. Yet our greatest ancestors look upon it as the noblest of domestic animals and the symbol of power. The presence of a ram in the home represents protection against lightning. The Shona believe that the sheep is invulnerable to lightning; they swear that no sheep is ever struck by lightning. The association between the Sun God and the ram here is very clear. The very ancestral spirits that cover their mediums with black material (or shirts, gowns dresses) that have white circular patches in the centre to represent the sun, are the very ones to whom rams are dedicated. These are elements of Egyptian and Kushite "pagan" religion surviving even after the invasion of Christianity.

Let us now look elsewhere in Africa and see if there is evidence of this "pagan" Egyptian religion. "The greatest of all the Egyptian temples of Nubia — of the southern land that would become the kingdom of Kush — was built at Sulb on the west bank of the Nile. Its avenue of approach was guarded by rams and lions carved in granite. Both rams and lions were taken to their temples at Barkal, near Napata on the Nile, by the Kushite pharaohs of the twenty-fifth dynasty — they who had conquered Egypt from the south. Thereafter, the ram, symbol of Amun, became one of the great divine symbols of Kush: even to this day, you may find many granite rams at Meroe and Naga as they lie discarded in the lonely sand. But the ram, symbol of Amun, also found its god-like way along the North African coast, for the Lybico-Berber peoples of that region took it from the Egyptians just as the Kuchites did. . . . Wherever its earliest origins may have been . . . the sacred ram was carried far across the continent. Many African peoples have celebrated its divinity. The Mandingo of the western Sudan consider that the god of storm and thunder takes earthly shape as a ram. The Yoruba national god, Shango, appears with a ram's mask, and is equally the god of storm and thunder. The Baoule of the Ivory Coast represent Niannie, the personalized sky, with the mask of a ram; and the god of lightning is also a ram for the Fon people of Dahomey. Divine rams in one guise or another, with one significance or another, carry on right down through the Cameroons into the remote basin of the Congo. Carvers in wood are making them to this day." (25) If we consider the Lake Chad area, we come across exactly the same. " . . . the Sao (of Kanem) constructed towns (and) fashioned rams' heads in pottery . . . " (26)

From all this, it is very clear that the Egyptian Sun God symbolized by the ram spread to many parts of Africa. It is clear too from the above quotations that, in Africa, it originated in Egypt and then was taken to Kush; from Kush, it then spread to the rest of Africa. The important point to observe is that the Egyptian Sun God was not taken to the rest of Africa by Egyptian missionaries of this ancient religion in the way that European missionaries brought the Christian Gospel to Africa in the nineteenth century. It was spread to other parts of Africa by the very Africans who observed it as their religion in the Nile Valley. The migration of these Africans to the rest of the continent also meant the spread of these elements of this religion of ancient Egypt.

The ubiquity of the ram in Africa is evidence that Christianity, which was introduced into the Nile Valley, did not altogether destroy all the elements of the ancient religion of Egypt and Kush; it also provides further evidence that the Africans who occupy the continent of Africa originated in the Nile Valley. There is no other corner of Africa that is known to have worshipped the Sun God that was symbolized by the ram. Culturally, Kush was not independent of Egypt. We are now in a position to go further and say that, culturally, Africa was not independent of Kush. From any angle, Bantu Africa is seen to be a direct child of Kush and a grandchild of Egypt.

(3) DIVINE KINGSHIP

In the institution of Divine Kingship, Africa exhibits absolute unity. In every case, the road to the divine kingships of continental Africa leads from Egypt through Kush. The first known divine kingship in Africa is that of Egypt; the next one is that of Kush. From Kush, it then spread to the rest of Africa. But here again, it did not spread to continental Africa independently of the people who practised it in the Nile Valley. The migration of the Africans from the valley to the rest of continental Africa meant the spread of the cultural traits of the valley to the rest of Africa and these included the institution of divine kingship.

That the kings of Egypt and Kush were divine is accepted; that the kings and chiefs of Africa were and are still divine is also a fact. An African state was and is a theocracy. This is so because it is jointly owned and ruled by both the dead and the living but with the former as the superior partners. Both the land and the chieftainship itself do not belong to the living but to the dead partners. The living are the vicars, the tenants, and never the outright owners of the land and all that may be in it. The chief is the "owner" of the land only in so far as he is the direct representative of the founding ancestor of the state who is deemed to be the real owner of the land and the state.

The institution of divine kingship touches on aspects of the basic philosophy of African religion in general and, in the African mind, this goes back to the beginning of human creation. Those interested in the details of this religious philosophy should read my "The Dynamics of Traditional Religion," which

deals with this subject. In African religious philosophy, superiority and inferiority are measured in terms of distance from the Creator. Since the creation of the first human being or the first generation of human beings, a hierarchy of human creation has developed and continues to develop. At the apex of the pyramid is the first human being to be created; at the bottom of the pyramid are the living beings. The first human being is the greatest and most superior in the whole hierarchy of human creation, partly because he is the progenitor of humanity itself and partly because he is the nearest to the Creator. The source of all power and all wisdom is the Creator; he who is nearest to the Creator is inferior and only to the Creator and to no other. In the whole hierarchy of human creation, he is the greatest, most powerful and most divine.

The African believes that this is so mainly because only this man, or the first generation of men, knows the Creator. He knows the Creator, the source of all power, because he was in direct touch with him at the time of creation. He received all his orders direct from the Creator; he received all his power direct from the Creator. The generations that descended from the first man only know the Creator indirectly through the first man. Those who, in the hierarchy of human creation, are near the source of power, are more powerful than those further away from this source. This being the case, there is an absolute need to keep in touch with those nearer to the Creator who, in consequence, know more about Him and are more powerful.

To the African mind therefore, to sever links with the hierarchy above is tantamount to severing links with the source of power, the Creator. This would be unthinkable, hence links with the whole chain of creation is maintained. To tap one link of the chain amounts to tapping the whole chain, to break one link amounts to breaking the whole chain.

For our purposes, what is of importance is that the first man to be created was a political, religious, economic and social animal. The orders he received from the Creator covered every aspect of his life. The government he created for his children and grandchildren was inevitably a theocratic government. In such a government, there could be no economic life divorced from religion or politics. All aspects of life were inseparably inter-woven. Likewise, the polities created by his progeny were theocracies. The first ancestor was the real ruler of those polities, with the founders of dynasties as the vicars and direct representatives on earth. These founding ancestors could not be independent of him for he was the only one who truly knew the Creator and His wishes. To sever links with him amounted to severing links with the Creator who was also the source of all power. According to this philosophy, there is no generation in the whole hierarchy of creation that can be independent of the one above it. In other words, there is no living being who can be independent of his ancestry. To be independent is to lose all links with the source of all power and is therefore tantamount to losing all power.

This is precisely the one thing the kings and chiefs of Africa cannot afford to do. Inevitably, the African chief was and is a divine ruler because he rules by virtue of divine power from the Most Divine, the Creator.

Whether or not this is the sort of reasoning that accounts for the genesis of the institution of Divine Monarchy in Egypt, I am not in a position to state categorically. But in the rest of Africa, this reasoning is unquestionable. The reader who is interested in the details of this philosophy is again referred to Chapter 1 of "The Dynamics of Traditional Religion" where an attempt to produce the evidence was made. However, in view of the fact that all African "cultural roads" definitely lead from Egypt through Kush, it is very possible that this was the philosophy behind the beginning of this institution in Egypt. Kush then inherited it from Egypt and passed it on to the rest of continental Africa.

The king was more than a human being. He carried the divine power of his ancestors on whose behalf he was ruling. These ancestors had in turn obtained it from the greater forces above them in the hierarchical chain of creation. As a result of this, the fate of the state was closely bound up with the state of the king — physical, moral, and so on. The poor health of the king was deemed to affect adversely "the health" of the whole state. Likewise, his unhappiness or poverty was deemed to affect the happiness or economic health of the whole state. It was therefore incumbent upon every member of the state to keep the King happy, fit and prosperous for the good of the whole state and, therefore, every individual within the state. For evidence of all this, we need to look across the continent of Africa again.

Levtzion writes, "The monarchies of the Sudanese Kingdoms and empires had their origins in the Office of the head of a clan or chief of a small chieftaincy. In both these, secular authority had been combined with religious priesthood. But it appears that as they developed into monarchies, the sacred element was emphasised. Indeed, elements of divine kingship may be traced in those monarchies." To this, Al-Muhallabi, writing on Kanem, adds, — "People approach the monarch prostrating, rolling on the ground and putting dust on their heads and no one is allowed to sneeze in the presence of the king." About the people of the Benue River of Nigeria, Davidson writes, — "The divine kingship of the Jukun of Benue River, in Nigeria recalls the divine kingship of Kush and Egypt, and is far from being alone in that respect."

Darfur is about six hundred miles to the west of the Nile Valley and in the Sahara desert. It too was not free from Egyptian influence. About it, Arkell states, "There are so many parallels between the institutions of the divine kingdom of Darfur and those of the divine kingdom of Kush that it seems probable that they are due to the foundation of a kingdom in Darfur by the exiled royal family of Meroe after the fall of that city." In the Sudan Republic of today, there is a tribe called the Shilluk. The founding ancestor of this community is called Nyikang. About this community, Evans-Pritchard writes, — "We can only understand the place of the kingship in Shilluk society when we realize that it is not the individual at any time reigning who is king, but Nyikang who is the medium between man and God, and is believed in some way to participate in God as he does in the king."

This immediately reminds us of the African religious philosophy analysed above. That the chief here on earth is not the real ruler is plain enough. That the king in Shilluk society, as in every other African society, is not independent of the forces above him, culminating in the Creator, is also evident.

Evans-Pritchard goes on, "Our authorities say that the Shilluk believe that should the king become physically weak, the whole people might suffer, and further, that if a king becomes sick or senile he should be killed to avoid some grave national misfortune, such as defeat in war, epidemic or famine. The king must be killed to save the kingship and, with it, the whole Shilluk people."

It is clear from this that the African king was indeed more than a human being. His fate was bound up with the fate of his state. This was so because he was a theocratic king. In him was vested part of the power and authority of the founding ancestor of the state. That founding ancestor was indirectly in touch with the Creator, the source of all power through the generations above him. What Evans-Pritchard describes above is not only true of the Shilluk community of the Sudan but is also generally true of every African chiefdom. Here again, it is not an accident that all Africa south of the Sahara should have the institution of divine kingship in common. There has been no African in the past who might have marched from one region to another, converting every African chiefdom to divine monarchy. The ubiquity of this institution can only be explained by the common origins of the Africans in the Nile Valley. After the initial separation of those Africans that headed for West Africa and those that headed for southern Africa after 600 A.D., we cannot imagine that links were ever again established between them. Their common cultural traits that are discernible even today must of necessity have been features of their civilization when they were still together in the Nile Valley.

(4) CHRISTIANITY

I consider this section to be particularly important. While all the other sections help us to know and understand the nature of the civilization of the Africans who colonized Africa they do not pinpoint when these peoples left north-east Africa for the whole continent. We know when Christianity was born; we know too when it came to the Nile Valley. This very much helps us to determine when the Bantu left Kush and the neighbourhood. It helps us too to differentiate between those Africans referred to as "true Negroes" and those called Bantu. The difference is one of distinctions in culture, and Christianity, in addition to others such as language, forms one of the major dividing lines.

That the Bantu were Christian when they left north-east Africa is irrefutable. It can only be denied if there were some other religion elsewhere in the world that was associated with the cross. As far as I know, the cross was associated with the crucifixion of Jesus and no other. Therefore, any people who associated with the cross were associating themselves with Jesus and were therefore Christians. If this is correct, it becomes a simple historical fact that our ancestors were Christian by the time they migrated out of the Nile Valley.

Furthermore, African association with Christianity in itself is historical evidence that the ancestors of the Bantu originated from the Nile Valley. Before the year 1 000 A.D., Christianity did not exist anywhere else in Africa outside Egypt, Nubia (Kush) and Ethiopia. There may be traces of early Christianity in some parts of the African Mediterranean coast such as Libya. But this is known to have been taken over there by the Berbers who themselves were a segment of the same Africans or Negro-Hamitic peoples from Egypt. The eastern Mediterranean region and Syria are known to have adopted Christianity. It is almost certain that it was Christians from this region who brought Christianity to Egypt from which it spread to Kush. The important point is that it came into Africa through the Nile Valley alone.

In the fifteenth century, even Europe heard rumours of the existence of Christianity in one corner of the African continent and that was Ethiopia. One of the objectives of Prince Henry the Navigator was to establish links between Portugal and Ethiopia. This was so because Ethiopia was rumoured to be Christian and Christian Portugal wanted to establish an alliance with that one part of the African continent that was thought to be Christian and together organize a crusade against Islam. This in itself is evidence that Christianity is not known to have existed in any part of Africa other than the north-eastern corner. This is the very corner from which the Bantu emigrated and, inevitably, they were Christian. This information in itself is vital because it very much helps us to clarify several important aspects of African history that have been so far nebulous or have been in the realms of speculation.

Let us first find out when Christianity was introduced into the Nile Valley and the horn of Africa. All evidence is conclusive that it was introduced into the horn of Africa after 300 A.D. and not before. This is not to suggest that no Africans left this region before the year 300. I have already hinted that those who left the Valley before about 300 were those referred to as the "true Negroes." They missed Christianity or Christianity missed them; the later linguistic developments for which those who left Nubia after 600 A.D. were called Bantu had not yet reached fruition; they did not experience the advances that took place in the region in the fields of iron technology and architecture after 300 A.D. It was these developments that made the earlier emigrants culturally different from the later migrants who precipitated what I have here called the Great Bantu Explosion of the period after 600 A.D.

The fact that the Bantu migrants were Christian also helps us to discover the main causes of the Great Bantu Explosion. Because the great migration was sudden, explosive and far-reaching in its consequences on the whole African continent, it must have been caused by a factor or set of factors that was equally sudden, drastic and explosive. By scrutinizing the events of the period between, let us say, 500 and 700 A.D., we can pinpoint the causes of this Great Bantu Explosion. From this alone, the reader should be able to appreciate the significance of this early Nubian Christianity in helping us to understand important threads of early African history.

Writing about Ethiopia, Huntingford states, — "In A.D. 333, Christianity was introduced by a Syrian named Frumentius. According to both traditions and the Greek and Latin historians, Frumentius, after establishing the new religion, visited St. Athanasius, the famous Patriarch of Alexandria and was made by him head of the new Ethiopian Church . . .". The king of Axum who was converted by Frumentius was called Ezana. After his conversion, Ezana made Christianity the official religion of the country and it has continued to this day to be a force of immense power throughout Ethiopia, permeating all phases of Ethiopian life.

This means that Christianity was introduced into the Egyptian Nile delta just before it was introduced into Ethiopia. This is likely to have been after 300 A.D. However, it took longer for Christian missionaries to introduce this new religion into Nubia (Kush), which is of greater interest to us here. About this, Davidson writes, — "Converted in the sixth century by missionaries from the eastern Mediterranean, these Nubians of the middle Nile remained Christian until overwhelmed by Islamic invasion not much less than 1 000 years later. Their culture left a permanent mark on the eastern Sudan mainly through the Nubian language (which won us the name Bantu); but its visible remains today are little more than a handful of ruined red brick churches, some fine murals or fragments of murals and a great deal of handsome painted pottery. Only future research can show how far these Christian kingdoms of Nubia served as a link between the lands to the west and the lands to the north and east (and of course the lands to the south), and how far they raised a barrier."

So far, the position then is that Christianity was introduced into Lower Egypt just after 300 A.D. and, as evidence of it, we came across the Patriarch of Alexandria. It was next introduced into Ethiopia by a Syrian called Frumentius in the year 333 A.D. Then it was introduced into Nubia (Kush) between 500 and 600 A.D. by missionaries from the eastern Mediterranean area. When Axum invaded, conquering Kush and destroying Meroe in the fourth century, Nubia was clearly not yet Christian. Many Nubians (Kushites) were of course driven out of the Nile Valley and no doubt some of them drifted to the west towards West Africa and others drifted to the south towards the great East African Lakes. But this drift did not bring about the birth of Bantu Africa. Bantu Africa was created by Africans who were Christian. We therefore have to consider another cause of the Bantu Explosion which must have taken place after 600 A.D. Any such explosion that took place up to 500 A.D. could not have scattered Christian fragments from Nubia into all Africa because Nubia was not yet Christian. But any dramatic and explosive event that took place in Egypt and Nubia after 600 was bound to scatter into Africa Christian fragments from the Nile Valley. This event was the conquest of the area by the followers of the Prophet Mohammed and this took place soon after the death of the Prophet in 632.

About this, we earlier came across Bernard Lewis saying, — "It was in the year 639 that the Muslim Arabs, who had already conquered Syria and Palestine, appeared on the eastern borders of Egypt. By 641, Egypt had been wrested

from the Byzantines and a treaty was signed whereby it was incorporated in the Arab Empire." He goes on to say, — "From Egypt, they moved westwards, in a great sweep of conquest that was to bring them to the Atlantic coast of Morocco, and across the sea into Spain, Sicily and even France."

It must be to this great surge of Muslim conquest that we must look for an explanation of the sudden Bantu Explosion of the century 600 to 700. Exactly what these Arab Moslems did in the land of Nubia is not clear. It is possible that they conquered Nubia; if they did not, many Egyptians must have fled from the Muslim conquest and rushed up the Nile Valley. If so, these Egyptians set in motion a virtual human avalanche which sent shock waves both up the Nile Valley and to the west of the valley in the direction of the Lake Chad area. By 750 the Bantu were in West Africa and the Ghana Empire was taking shape. In the southern direction, the Dziva-Hungwe people — who were ruled by the Waqlimi — appear to have crossed the Zambezi River, and the Zanj Empire was also taking shape. By about the year 1 000, the Mbire Soko people crossed the Zambezi River and started to drive the Dziva-Hungwe people south of the Limpopo River and into S. Africa and Botswana.

I have insisted that the Bantu who colonized Africa after 600 A.D. were Christian. The evidence is overwhelming and cannot be brushed aside. In several cases above, I have used the Shona of Zimbabwe as our "case study". Let us look at them once more and see what information is available.

In "From Mutapa To Rhodes" I stated that when I travelled from one part of this country to another consulting with spirit mediums in the initial stages of my research, I was rather surprised to find the symbol of the cross sewn onto the garments and hats put on by the mediums of our great ancestral spirits. Asked what these "crosses" symbolized, the answer was invariably, "This is our tradition." But I could not accept this at its face value, because I knew that historically the cross was associated with Christianity and nothing else.

As I pursued my research over the years, I continued to come across the symbol of the cross. For instance, I accompanied several spirit mediums and traditional doctors who were exorcising evil spirits (such as witchcraft spirits) and "expelling", ritually, dangerous avenging spirits such as spirits of people who had been murdered by the ancestors of the families they were now haunting for justice. After exorcising each evil spirit or avenging spirit, the spirit medium or traditional doctor made the symbol of the cross on the forehead and on the back of the head with ritual snuff dipped in water. Here again, on asking them what the sign symbolized, the answer in every case was, "This is our tradition." But surely every tradition must have historical origins!

Next, I watched how the spirit medium made the ritual snuff itself. Traditional African tobacco (not the types that were introduced by the Europeans at the time of colonial occupation) is ground into a powder that is then loaded into a small gourd. The gourd is closed with a tight wooden stopper. Then the medium looks for two clay pots. Inside one of these pots, twigs of special

parasites are arranged in the form of a cross. Some green leaves from special trees are placed on top of the parasite twigs. The little gourd containing snuff is then placed inside the pot on top of the twigs and water is added. The second pot is turned upside down and is used as the lid for the pot containing the gourd. Fire is then made and the water in the bottom pot boils and heats the gourd in it. This lasts for about an hour until the snuff is deemed ready for use.

The interesting thing here once more is the arrangement of the parasite twigs in the form of a cross. Again, asked what this symbolized, the answer from both the spirit medium and traditional doctors was, "This is our tradition." Certainly this was in accordance with traditions but I was interested to know how such a tradition ever started.

In 1965, I made my first visit to the Matojeni national shrine in the Matopo hills. I was in the company of a family that was looking for a spiritual force old and powerful enough to "service" and old ancestral spirit haunting one of them.

As I revealed in "From Mutapa to Rhodes", it was discovered that this man was being pestered by a whole chain of big ancestors of the Shona Family. The first one of them was Mabwemashava who is Mutapa I; the next was Rusvingo who is Mutapa II, the third was Chaminuka, their father; the fourth was Murenga Sororenzou, the father of Chaminuka; the fifth was Tovera, Murenga's father. These are the greatest known ancestors of the Shona. It was they who migrated from north-east Africa towards the south. It was Mabwemashava and Rusvingo who crossed the Zambezi River into this country at the head of the Mbire Soko Family. It was they who founded the Mutapa Empire. It was from these five great ancestors that the Shona inherited the symbolism of the cross. Therefore, these great ancestors, I felt, should be able to give us the answer regarding the origins of the symbol of the cross among their descendants.

Before very long, I had the answer. Several rituals were organized for these great ancestors. Because there are no ancestral spirits in this country old and powerful enough to "service" these returning ancestors, they instructed members of the family of their medium to "service" them. After "cleansing up" one of these ancestors, the officiant was instructed to make the sign of the cross on the forehead and the back of the head with ritual snuff. As he made the sign, he was instructed to say "We have done this in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour." After exorcising an evil spirit or after expelling an avenging spirit, he would repeat the same words as he made the sign of the cross.

This no longer came as a surprise. I had always associated the cross with Christianity. So the cross of twigs, at the bottom of the pot in which ritual snuff was made, meant "We are making this snuff in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour." Now that we know that our ancestors came from Christian Nubia, there should be nothing surprising about all this. If the symbolism of the pre-Christian religion of Egypt and Kush is still with us today — the sun and the ram — why should we expect all traces of Nubian Christianity to be completely dead among our ancestors?

Probably, the most amazing development is that associated with Chaminuka, the greatest active mhondoro of this country. The Shona refer to Chaminuka as a prophet. There are many things he is believed to have prophesied, the last of which is said to have been the coming of the Europeans into this country in 1890. The Ndebele murdered his medium in 1883. Just before he died, he is believed to have warned them that he was going to bring into the country stiff-legged people (people wearing long pairs of trousers) who would strike fire on their finger tips (matches) and would bring a huge rock with them that would "run" across the whole length of the country (train). The purpose of their coming would be to destroy Ndebele power and this was believed to be a punishment to them for killing his medium.

What the Shona did not know was that he is a prophet because he works in association with a prophetic spirit. The spirit originated from a man who himself was not African. Earlier, I gave his name as Ngauza. This man was a Christian missionary prophet who performed his missionary work among the ancestors of the Shona in the Nile Valley. He lived with them and died amongst them. After his death, he came back to work as a spirit among the descendants of the people he had closely associated with in the Nile Valley. His first medium was Chaminuka, the son of Murenga. After the death of Chaminuka, he took possession of the same medium with Chaminuka himself. Since then, the two of them have always possessed the same medium. Because he was a prophet when he was a living being, his medium automatically acquires this prophetic element. But because he himself is not an ancestor of the Shona (he is a foreign spirit — shavi) he works in the name of Chaminuka.

A few rituals have already been organized for this prophetic spirit. He covers himself (or his medium) with white materials. He wears a white robe that flows to the ground with long sleeves. He carries with him a long stick with a hooked end very much after the fashion of the biblical shepherds. He does not part with the Bible although I am not yet sure that he is able to read it. He speaks several languages and he claims that he learned them as he travelled from country to country preaching the Gospel. One cannot doubt that he is a Christian missionary if one can see what his medium does when he is possessed with this prophetic spirit.

Here is further evidence of Christianity among the ancestors of the Shona. We have seen the symbolism of the cross in many Shona rituals; we have actually seen some of these ancestors conducting their rituals "in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour;" and now, we actually see the spirit of a Christian prophet in action among the Shona. The symbolism of the cross clearly has historical origins. That the junior ancestors give the answer regarding this symbolism as "This is our tradition" is not surprising. They simply inherited the symbolism from their own ancestors who were personally involved in Christianity; but they themselves did not know how it had originated because they had not yet been born and never personally experienced it. As years passed, the words "In the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour" were forgotten and only the symbolism remained.

All of the above constitutes very strong evidence that our ancestors did not leave the Nile Valley until after the year 600 A.D. A century thereafter, Bantu Africa had been born from Christian Nubia (Kush), for these Nubians spread to every corner of Africa south of the Sahara with their Christianity. We now need to examine evidence of this in the other regions of the continent.

The Darfur region is about six hundred miles to the west of the middle Nile and about half way between the Nile and the Niger. About this region, Davidson writes, — "But Ain Fara, in 1958, would provide an archaeological surprise. For it suddenly appeared probable, and perhaps certain, that this tumbled structure on the crown of a bare hill, . . . was not the ruin of a palace but the ruin of a monastery of Christian Nubia."

In 1929, a British Visitor to Ain Fara collected fragments of pottery and in 1958 presented them to Doctor Arkell of London University. Davidson again writes, — "Doctor Arkell immediately recognised them as Nubian Christian ware. One of them, and the Christian evidence could hardly be clearer, is the fragment of a saucer finely painted with a fish and a cross; and the other is a piece of terracotta stamped with a dove's head and a cross; both of them may date from about the tenth century."

Thus the existence of Christianity in the Darfur area and after 600 A.D. is undeniable. As stated earlier, this Christianity was not taken to this region or any other outside the Nile Valley by itinerant missionaries. It was taken by migrants from Nubia and it had become a feature of their life.

Furthermore, now that we know that the Bantu were divided into the three Great Bantu Families, and now that we know their main distinguishing features, we are in a position to identify the family associated with the fragments of pottery described by Doctor Arkell as "Nubian Christian ware" above. These must be members of the Dziva-Hungwe complex — "the masters of the water." As we saw elsewhere in Southern Africa, they associated and still associate themselves with water and aquatic animals. The fish painted on the fragment of the saucer is identification with water. The very same people also identified themselves with the bird and this is why I refer to them as the Dziva-Hungwe people. The Hungwe is the fish eagle and in Zimbabwe it is represented by the Zimbabwe Bird. As the Dziva-Hungwe Family grew and segmented, some of the off-shoots started to identify themselves with other birds. Here in Zimbabwe, we have several segments of this family who are known by the totem SHIRI and this simply means BIRD, which is Matabeleland is called NYONI. Some of them have taken up the dove for their totem and are called Njiva or Chiwa, which means dove. There are no members of the Soko or Tonga Families in this country that associate themselves with birds of any sort. I have no reasons to expect the situation in 10th century Darfur to have been any different. Therefore, the terracotta stamped with a dove's head and the saucer painted with a fish must necessarily represent members of the Dziva-Hungwe people. The cross on both fragments represents Christianity. I may add that no less than seven soapstone carvings of fish were discovered at Great Zimbabwe;

several soapstone carvings of birds, including the famous Zimbabwe Bird, were also found there. Both the birds and the fish represent members of the Dziva-Hungwe Family who "tamed" this land before the invasion of the Mbire Soko people around 1 000 A.D. It is also interesting to note that Doctor Arkell thought that the fragments of pottery referred to above in connection with Ain Fara were likely to be remains of the tenth century, just about the time the Dziva-Hungwe people took possession of the land south of the Zambezi Valley.

If therefore you come across bird paintings or carvings or any representation of birds, you have most certainly come across something representing members of the Dziva-Hungwe Family. On the other hand, if you come across a serpent carved, painted or portrayed in any other way, it represents members of "the masters of the land" — the Great Soko Family.

We need to resort to our Shona case study again for evidence of this. Chaminuka, the great Shona spirit, is known as a snake charmer. He is associated with three snakes, one of which is known by the name MABOTA.

Furthermore, the Jukwa spirits (the great national spirits or the divinities) are sometimes called "Nyoka", meaning "snake". What is interesting is that when one of these great spirits possesses a medium, the medium actually glides on his or her chest like a snake. It is this behaviour that has led some scholars into thinking that there are some snake spirits that possess human beings in this country. These are simply Jukwa spirits that associate themselves with snakes. Thus whilst the fish and any bird represents members of the Dziva-Hungwe Family, the serpent represents members of the Soko Family. This identification with the fish, the bird or the serpent did not start in Zimbabwe or in West Africa but in the Nile Valley. As the Bantu radiated from the Nile Valley into the rest of Africa, they took their symbolisms with them.

However, we have digressed somewhat. Our attention should be centred on the existence of Christianity in other regions of Africa. We have come across evidence of Christianity among the ancestors of the Shona, and in the Darfur area. When the Portuguese sailors of Prince Henry the Navigator reached the West African coast in the fifteenth century, they made a report to the King of Portugal on the presence in Benin (Nigeria) of a powerful monarch called Ogane. — "In accordance with a very ancient custom, the kings of Beni, on ascending the throne, sent ambassadors to him (Ogane) with rich gifts to inform him that, by the decease of their predecessor, they had succeeded to the Kingdom of Beni, and to request him to confirm them in the same. As a sign of confirmation this Prince Ogane sent them a staff and headpiece . . . made all of shining brass . . . He also sent a cross, of the same brass and shaped like something religious and holy. Without these emblems the people would consider that they did not reign lawfully, nor could they call themselves true kings." (27). Clearly, the cross had become part of the royal emblem. The reporter makes it clear that this was in accordance with a very ancient custom, and therefore it had deep roots in the society.

If we move to the Congo Region, we find J. Vansina writing, "The dead were buried with their vessels and their ornaments. These include copper and iron objects such as belts, pins and already the so-called Katanga cross." This cross has been found in one form or another by archaeologists everywhere in Africa. Walton talks of the evidence as pointing "to the conclusion that the ingot (the cross and the "H"-shaped ingot) reached S. Rhodesia from north-east Africa at the beginning of the Monomotapa period." Practically all the main elements of the civilization of our early ancestors are easily traceable to north-east Africa. Christianity is no exception and we cannot reject the evidence that our ancestors were Christian when they migrated to the rest of Africa.

I wish to remind the reader that although the existence of Christianity helps to strengthen my argument that the ancestors of the Bantu came from the Nile Valley, its greater significance lies in almost pinpointing the time these ancestors left north-east Africa. This is something about which almost all the other sources of our evidence are inconclusive. We cannot establish precisely when divine kingship, dry-stone building or iron-technology started in the Nile Valley. But we know when Christianity was introduced there. Because our ancestors were Christian when they radiated into all Africa, it inevitably means that they migrated away from the Nile Valley after the introduction of Christianity. This too helps us to locate the crisis or series of crises that led to their sudden migration. Thus this issue of early Bantu Christianity is highly significant.

(5) IRON TECHNOLOGY

I am not going to discuss at length the "Stone" or "Bronze" ages. This is not because Africa did not experience these ages, but because we are concerned with the peopling of the continent by the Bantu people and these were an Iron Age people. Africa experienced a New Stone Age; it experienced a Bronze Age. But here, we are going to dismiss them in a few sentences and concentrate on the Iron Age.

The Hamites and Negroes that we came across around 5 000 or 4 000 B.C. were Stone Age peoples; those we saw around 3 000 B.C. fathering the ancient civilization of Egypt were still a Stone Age people.

The Bushmen and Hottentots were a Stone Age people even up to the second millenium of the Christian Era. By the year 1 000 B.C. however, both the Hamites and the Negroes were a Bronze Age people. This is however not the same as suggesting that the Stone Age was altogether dead. I would go so far as to suggest that Stone remained a factor until iron took over.

It is generally believed that the use of iron was first discovered in Asia between the Caucasus and Asia Minor around 1 500 B.C. By 1 000 B.C., both the Hittites and the Assyrians are known to have been using it. From this region, iron technology then spread to Syria and from there it filtered into Egypt. But as late as the year 400 B.C. there is evidence to suggest that iron was not known at all

in Kush. Both the Egyptians and the Kushites buried their kings and queens together with important items of their possessions but there were no iron tools in them until after 400 B.C. By the year 100 B.C. however, the iron-smelting industry had become possibly the most important industry in Meroe and, at the same time, Meroe had already become or was soon to become the greatest iron-smelting centre on the continent.

Because iron-smelting in Kush was confined to a small class of people, almost a secret society, which was highly honoured and privileged, it is very possible that the Kushites who migrated from the Nile Valley at the beginning of the Christian Era, knew little or nothing about iron-smelting. But those who left Kush from let us say, about 100 or 200 A.D., were certainly Iron Age people. We must realize that the industry was not stagnant; it was developing as improvements were made in its technology. Hence it is not inappropriate to refer to the Early Iron Age and the Late Iron Age. Those who migrated from the Nile Valley towards the beginning of the Christian era could have acquired no more than the rudiments of iron technology.

The Bantu who peopled the continent of Africa were a fully Iron Age people. But as we now know, they were also a Christian Age people. We saw Christianity being introduced into Kush or Nubia in the sixth century; therefore, the Bantu who populated Africa must have migrated away from the Nile Valley after 600 A.D. These are the people who belong to what may be called the New or Later Iron Age.

Wainwright states that by 50 B.C. "The most astonishing change had come over the scene. Smelting works on a gigantic scale had already been initiated at Meroe . . .". To this, Sayce adds, "Mountains of iron slag enclose the city mounds on their northern and eastern sides, and excavation has brought to light the furnaces in which the iron was smelted and fashioned into tools and weapons." Davidson states, "By the time of the building of Musawrat, Meroe was the centre of the largest iron-smelting industry in Africa south of the Mediterranean coast. It is reasonable to suppose that its products and, later, its technology went steadily and irresistibly into the lands to the west and south. In this vitally important diffusion of iron technology, Kush was therefore to southern Africa what the civilizations of the Mediterranean, a few centuries earlier, had been to northern Europe." Elsewhere, he states that Meroe "deserved an honourable place among civilizations, that have influenced the world. With Meroe, one may reasonably say, the history of modern Africa has begun."

Indeed, this iron technology did not spread from Meroe to the rest of Africa independently of the people who practised it in Kush. There were no iron-smelting missionaries, so to speak, who left Kush and went about all over Africa teaching communities the technique of iron-smelting. The very people who practised it in Kush migrated to the rest of Africa with their technology. Of course, as these people spread their tentacles to all Africa, they came across

Negroes who had left the Nile Valley before the iron-smelting industry had developed there. They absorbed these earlier migrants and taught them the technique, just as they acculturated them in other respects. Before the Great Bantu Explosion of the period after 600 A.D. there was no iron technology in Africa south of the Sahara and outside the Nile Valley. The "scattering of fragments" from Kush that I referred to earlier as a result of this Great Explosion, also meant the "scattering" of iron technology from the same region to all Africa.

What were the general effects of the spread of this iron technology on the rest of Africa? It is a fact that the smelting of iron marked the beginning of a new revolution that brought other revolutions in its wake. In order to appreciate this fully, the reader needs to be conscious of the simple fact that before the discovery of iron technology, the peoples of the continent of Africa used stone, bone and wood. With implements and weapons made out of these materials, it was just not possible to "tame" the wild savannahs and wild equatorial forests of the continent and convert them into worthwhile and habitable farm lands. As a result, the many jungles of wild Africa remained impenetrable to the Negro peoples. The coming of iron technology immediately meant the penetration and conquest of wild Africa by those with iron implements and weapons. This can only be appreciated fully if we realize that it took the Bantu only four hundred years, from about 600 to 1 000 A.D. to convert the whole continent south of the Sahara desert into a "Bantu colony". It was the iron implement and the iron weapon that made this possible.

Earlier, I remarked on the very slow expansion, in terms of numbers, of both the Hamites and the Negroes in the Nile Valley. We noted that the Negro was already a feature of Africa by the year 5 000 B.C. Yet by the year 100 A.D. or even 600 A.D., there was still no "Bantu Africa" or "Negro Africa". I suggested that one of the reasons for this rather very slow expansion must be that the population itself expanded very slowly. If the population had expanded rapidly, the Nile Valley would have reached a stage when it could simply not cope with the increased population density and this alone would have compelled the people to migrate in large numbers to other parts of the continent. The mere fact that the continent was still not Negro or Bantu by the year 600 A.D. is strong evidence that the Nile Valley could still assimilate all the Hamites and Negroes on the continent. This rather very slow population growth of this people can justify our argument that one factor accounting for it could have been famine. If so, one of the factors accounting for recurrent years of famine could have been the inadequacy of the implements used before iron technology became a feature of the continent. It is difficult to imagine how a people could grow enough food for themselves when they used stone, bone and wooden implements.

By the year 300 B.C., the Nile Valley was certainly in the Bronze Age and was approaching the Iron Age. But copper, bronze and brass implements and weapons were not very efficient. It is even doubtful if they were really in

abundance in the Nile Valley. These implements and weapons were brittle and they did not enable the Negro to tame the wild African jungles effectively; they did not enable him to till the ground and make him self-sufficient in food. This is exactly what iron technology enabled him to do, hence his rapid expansion and rapid conquest of the African jungles once this technology was sufficiently developed.

Even mining itself was difficult without iron implements and tools. No doubt some sort of copper and gold mining went on before the discovery of iron technology. But this was not easy and it must have been restricted to a small percentage of the population of the valley. In addition, possibly only the ruling classes benefited from it. We may remember that the foundations of the early West African Empires such as Ghana, Mali and Songhay rested on the gold mining and gold-exporting industries. The people of the forest region extracted gold; those of the desert extracted salt. The gold-mining southern communities valued the northern salt; the salt-extracting northern communities valued the southern gold. The northern desert gold-seeking communities sold it to the Mediterranean peoples who valued it highly. In this way a network of trading links came into existence in West Africa. All this was facilitated by iron implements. We hear of no such trade in West Africa before the eighth century A.D. This represented nothing less than a revolution in West Africa.

If we turn to southern and eastern Africa, we find exactly the same thing happening and at much the same time. We hear of no gold-mining anywhere south of the Zambezi River before 800 A.D. Whilst some sort of trading along the East African coast north of the Zambezi River had started by that date, it was very insignificant and still did not affect the region south of the river. By 950, after the Dziva-Hungwe people with iron technology had taken over control of the region, gold-mining, iron-mining and ivory start to feature prominently and the coastal towns started to grow significantly. We have no reason to doubt that all this was made possible by iron implements. Because iron implements were stronger and more durable, the extraction of both gold and iron ore was easier and faster and therefore more than was needed for domestic purposes could be mined. In this way, iron technology promoted foreign trade.

We cannot deny that iron technology brought about centralized states in Africa. We do not hear of any empires in Africa south of the Sahara before about the year 800 A.D. All the empires that are known to have existed in Africa were created by people with iron technology. These include Ghana, Mali, Songhay, the Empire of the Waqlimi and the Mutapa Empire. These empires represented the superiority of iron over bone, stone, wood and even bronze. Those with iron weapons rapidly conquered those without and subjected them to their rule. As the iron-possessing conquerors brought more and more territory under their control, the need arose to appoint more and more provincial or regional rulers from amongst themselves. These regional rulers owed allegiance to the central paramount ruler. But the regional rulers found it

necessary to assign districts of their own regions to their own sons, cousins and supporters. In this way, a feudal structure — African feudalism — emerged and it was iron technology that facilitated it. From all this, one can see that iron technology was a revolution that brought about a chain of other revolutions in Africa — political, economic and social.

The unity of Bantu Africa is accounted for by the common origins of the Bantu people who migrated from the Nile Valley to all other parts of the continent. Because they came from the same locality, they inevitably had common cultural traits including language. Certainly iron technology is one of the most important of these common cultural traits. In all Africa, this technology was first acquired either in Egypt or Carthage. But Carthage is not of much significance to Bantu Africa. If iron smelting became known to Carthage before Egypt, it then spread to the rest of Africa south of the Sahara through Egypt and Kush. It did not spread to the rest of Africa independently of the other cultural traits — Divine kingship, the worship of the Egyptian Sun god, Christianity and all the other features that we have examined above. The migration of these "Egyptian Kushites" to the rest of the continent after 600 A.D. meant the automatic spread of these Nile Valley cultural traits to the rest of the continent.

Thus, the unity of Africa is not accidental or coincidental; it is explained by our ancient history. There was no iron technology in West Africa before the advent in the region of the Bantu migrants from the north-east; there was no iron technology in central and southern Africa before the advent in the regions of Bantu migrants from the north-east; there were no centralized states or empires anywhere in Africa before the advent of the migrants from the north-east after 600 A.D.; there was no feudalism in Africa outside the Nile Valley before about the year 600 A.D. All these are features of Bantu civilization and did not spread to the rest of Africa and could not possibly do so before the migration of these people to the other regions of the continent. When these people started to migrate from the Nile Valley after 600 A.D. and for reasons already examined, they did not take one direction but radiated into all directions but mainly towards the west and south. This meant the automatic radiation of the Kushitic cultural traits to the rest of Africa. Because these great Bantu migrations were caused by a common explosion or a common series of explosions, their effects in other regions tended to synchronize and this was only to be expected. The obstacles in the way of those that migrated towards the west were no greater than those in the way of the southern migrants.

Let us conclude this section by quoting Arkell once more, — "There is no reason to think that iron-smelting was invented independently in Negro Africa, but every reason to believe that the knowledge of iron-working was gradually diffused over Africa from the Kushite capital, Meroe." This was so because the very Negroes who populated Africa were themselves Kushites.

(6) ARCHITECTURE

Under this section, I am considering drystone building, hillside terracing and mud or dagga constructions mainly. While drystone construction and even hillside terracing are well-known to be amongst the most ancient features of north-east Africa, they were never thought to be in any way associated with those found in southern Africa. While the architects of those in north-east Africa were generally known, those responsible for similar constructions especially in southern Africa were never thought to be indigenous peoples of the continent of Africa. Historians and politicians in southern Africa would not believe that the Africans they saw in the region could have been responsible for structures that reflected an advanced civilization by the standards of the day. Naturally they harked at almost every ancient civilization such as Greek and Phoenician civilizations as the sources of the evidence of civilization that confronted them in southern Africa.

Of all these structures, Great Zimbabwe is easily the most prominent and most imposing in all southern Africa. Inevitably, theories connected with foreign elements surround Great Zimbabwe more than any other construction in the region. Even as recently as February 1980, politicians such as Ian Smith of the Rhodesian Front Party and Doctor Bertrand of UPAM made it clear during election campaigns that the Phoenician school was not dead. They either still do not believe or do not want to appear to believe that these imposing architectural structures were built by Africans. Their motives are clearly political but it could also be that this is accounted for by ignorance, since they themselves are not academic scholars.

Architecture is one of the African cultural elements that demonstrate the unity of the continent. It is not an isolated element nor is it unique to north-east or southern Africa. Like the other common cultural traits we have examined, it spread to all Africa with the people who fathered it in the Horn of Africa. There seems to be no archaeological evidence to prove that there were any of these constructions anywhere in Africa outside the Nile Valley before 600 A.D.

However, before we examine architecture in ancient Africa, we need to consider Great Zimbabwe and see how and where such ideas as that Great Zimbabwe was constructed by the Phoenicians emanated. Some of these schools of thought even went to the extent of suggesting that the Biblical King Solomon mined his gold from Zimbabwe. The queen of Sheba was also implicated and, naturally, those who tended to believe these stories started to imagine that it was these foreign elements or their agents — and never the African — who were responsible for the construction of the stone structures and possibly the terraces as well.

Hunters, fortune seekers, missionaries and adventurers, such as Selous, visited Zimbabwe before the British South Africa Company formed by Cecil Rhodes occupied the country in 1890. One of these travellers was William Posselt who

visited Great Zimbabwe in 1888. He persuaded his Shona guides to direct him to the hill above the valley ruins and climbed in and out by using monkey ropes. He saw four soapstone carvings of birds, all facing east. He uprooted one of these bird carvings and took it to South Africa where it was preserved in Cape Town. In this way, Posselt started the desecration of Great Zimbabwe. He was followed only three years later by Bent, who found another six soapstone bird carvings on the fort. He looked upon these "birds" as stylised representations of either hawks or vultures and thought that they had a phallic symbolism. It was he who started the theory of the Phoenicians. He argued that, to the ancient Egyptians, the hawk had served as an emblem of motherhood. He went on to maintain that a southern Arabian tribe of the Himyarite times used the vulture as a totem. To him, the Zimbabwe birds were very similar to the Assyrian Astarte or Venus and therefore represented the female element in creation. To him, similar birds among the Phoenicians were sacred to Astarte and were often found perched on her shrine. Because some of the Zimbabwe birds were found perched on the wall, Bent believed that they represented what similar birds had represented among the Phoenicians. He argued that the bird symbolism must therefore be of Phoenician origin and the Phoenicians must be responsible for constructing Great Zimbabwe.

In parts of Africa, cross-shaped and H-shaped ingot moulds have been found. These are thought to be of Phoenician origin. One such ingot was dug up from a cave on the Acropolis at Great Zimbabwe. Bent again jumped at this and treated it as "very good presumptive evidence to establish the fact that the gold workers of ancient Zimbabwe worked for the Phoenician market." To him, these Phoenicians visited this country for gold and it was during the course of these trading links that the Phoenicians constructed Great Zimbabwe.

It is true that Zimbabwe had trading connections with the outside world. But that outside world did not include the Phoenicians. The whole trade was orientated towards the east and was an Indian Ocean trade. The middle-men in this trade were Arab or Moor traders. These came to the east coast of Africa to collect items such as gold, iron ore and ivory. In return, they brought beads, materials and shells that were of value to the Africans. Most of the beads and materials came from India: some came from as far as Java. Trading links are known to have existed between India and China and some Chinese items ended up on the East African coast. The East African coastal towns of Sofala, Kilwa and Malindi thrived on this Indian Ocean trade. The same trade was also the backbone of the Mutapa Empire of which Great Zimbabwe was the capital. The Phoenicians did not come into the picture at all. The builders of Great Zimbabwe crossed the Zambezi from the north around 1 000 A.D., after the Arab traders had already established trading links with the Dziva-Hungwe people in the interior. The records of these Arab traders make no mention of any other foreign trader along the East African coast. When the Portuguese arrived in 1498, they came across the Arab traders along the east coast and no more. By implicating the Phoenicians, Bent was stretching his imagination too far.

In this way Bent set in motion the Phoenician theory which the European politicians of this country have very much tried to keep alive in order to refute any suggestions that Great Zimbabwe and lesser forts in southern Africa could have been constructed by Africans at all. These European adventurers and fortune seekers knew next to nothing about African history or custom and tradition for that matter. Naturally, their imaginations went wild on seeing anything that appeared "unafrikan" and that looked similar to any found elsewhere in the world. This imagination was stimulated by the degeneration of the once mighty Mutapa Empire which by 1890 was a poor shadow of the past. But here again, these Europeans did not realise that it was their European fellows, the Portuguese, who had done so much to dislocate and fragment the Shona Empire by destroying the coastal trade and by encouraging rancour and strife among the Shona themselves. In this way, the Portuguese destroyed the cohesion of the Shona Empire and the only source of wealth, which was east-coast foreign trade.

In 1980, there should be nothing particularly interesting about soapstone bird carvings or any bird effigies at all. Historians are alive to the fact that the bird symbolism is not unique to Zimbabwe: it has been found almost everywhere in Africa south of the Sahara; for instance, in the Transvaal, in Mozambique and even in Lesoto where Walton reported "a number of bird effigies carried on tall poles surrounding the "lelapa" of a witch-doctor in the Dilli Valley in South Basutoland."

Zimbabweans know for instance that there is a whole tribe in this country whose totem is Shiri (bird). But this totem also functions as a tribal designation and so we end up with tribes simply called "Shiri". The Shiri referred to, as we should be aware of now, is the Fish Eagle which in Shona is the Hungwe Bird. But the Hungwe Bird is also the Zimbabwe Bird. I have referred to one of the three original Great Bantu Families as the "Dziva-Hungwe" Family. This has been a reference to the "Masters of the Water" and we have come across segments of this Great Family throughout Africa. I called the Family "Dziva-Hungwe" because all its members were associated with water (Dziva - pool) and this is why their original designation was "Masters of the Water." But then, they picked on a particular creature that lived in water and started to identify themselves with it and this was the fish eagle (Hungwe).

We in Zimbabwe have always associated the bird and bird symbolisms with the Hungwe people; the same applies to the Mozambicans, the Tswana and the Suthu for that matter. As we have discovered above, the Tswana, the Suthu and the Nguni are all segments of the Dziva-Hungwe Family and are therefore all closely associated with the symbolism of the bird.

In "From Mutapa to Rhodes," I made it clear that the presence of the soapstone birds (Hungwe Birds) at Great Zimbabwe symbolised the precedence of the Dziva-Hungwe people in this country over the Mbire Soko Family that founded the Mutapa Empire. I made it clear that Great Zimbabwe was constructed by Mutapa II whose name was Chigwangu but who is today popularly known as

Rusvingo (fort), a nickname given to him after constructing the Zimbabwe Fort. In Shona circles, you can only "live in peace with the land" if you propitiate the ancestors of your predecessors who "tamed the land" for you. You cannot brush them aside and treat them as non-existent with impunity. According to Shona thinking, the consequences of such an attitude and such behaviour would be national drought and starvation which would intensify from year to year if there was no favourable response from those concerned; it could be an epidemic or pestilence or chain of other misfortunes. In other words, to ignore the ancestors of your predecessors would spell disaster. For this reason, the new invaders make an effort to propitiate the ancestors of their predecessors.

The original Bantu occupants of Zimbabwe were members of the Dziva-Hungwe Family. All indications are that they were already south of the Zambezi River by 800 A.D. It was they who "tamed" the land. Their conquerors and successors were the Mbire Soko people who invaded the country around 1 000 A.D. The Mbire Soko paramounts (the Mutapas), after capturing the country from the Dziva-Hungwe people, did what they could to propitiate the ancestors of their predecessors. In dedicating anything, in supplicating for rain, the Mbire Soko officials did not forget the ancestors of the Dziva-Hungwe people. At Matojeni in the Matopo Hills even today acclamations are made to Murenga Sororenzou (everything done at any of the national shrines in the Matopos is done in the name of Murenga Sororenzou), the great Mbire Soko and Venda ancestor. The names Soko, Tovera and Sororenzou represent the Mbire Soko conquerors of this country around 1 000 A.D.; Dziva and Mbedzi represent the ancestors of the Dziva-Hungwe Family. In accordance with Shona thinking, the ancestors of both families must work together for the good of the country and hence must be propitiated together. The conquerors must recognise the position, authority and influence of their predecessors if they are to "live in peace with the land."

This is exactly what is symbolized by the Zimbabwe Birds at Great Zimbabwe. I wish to remind the reader that Great Zimbabwe was the true capital of the Mutapa Empire from about 1050 (after the death of Mutapa I) to about 1500 when both Murenga, the Shona High Spirit, and the Mbire paramount shifted the headquarters of the empire to the province of Guruuswa (present-day Matabeleland). Because the African state was a theocracy, Great Zimbabwe could not be a political centre without at the same time being a religious centre. By virtue of this, Great Zimbabwe was the centre of national propitiation of both the Dziva-Hungwe and Mbire Soko ancestors. Any bird symbolism there represents the Dziva-Hungwe people.

It may be remembered that soapstone fish carvings or fish paintings were also found at Great Zimbabwe. These, too, represented the Dziva-Hungwe people. The fish like the Hungwe is associated with the "Masters of the Water." We have to this day a big segment of the Dziva-Hungwe Family whose totem is Hove (fish). Thus, some of these carvings, paintings and symbolisms now start

to be full of meaning with this unfolding of continental African history. If Bent, the father of the Phoenician theory in this country, had known the origins of the Bantu in North-East Africa, he would easily have understood the meaning of the soapstone bird carvings he saw at Great Zimbabwe.

All this is important because it helps us to understand aspects of the sculpture of this continent. Now that we are aware of the existence of the three Great Bantu Families in Africa, it is necessary to know what symbolisms were associated with this family and which were associated with that. In this way, we can determine who of the three Great Bantu Families were responsible for this feature and who for that. Archaeology gives us evidence of occupation: it gives us the periods of occupation: it gives us hints on the nature of the civilization of the occupants. But it remains silent on the identity of the occupants. This identity we can only discover through other sources. This is why it is absolutely necessary to know the main distinguishing characteristics and marks of the three Great Bantu Families. Hence the bird and the fish symbolisms deserved some attention.

Whether the bird as a totem or tribal symbolism started originally in Arabia, Assyria or Phoenicia, is not important. It should be evident by now that the Nile Valley was a confluence of many cultures. As such, Arab, Jewish, Syrian and even Phoenician cultural elements may be detected in the civilization of the Valley.

What is important to remember is that the Arabs or Syrians, Phoenicians, the Jews or Greeks did not personally diffuse elements of their cultures throughout Africa. They did not physically visit West, Central or Southern Africa. They injected elements of their cultures into Africa through Egypt and Kush at a time when the Negro was an inhabitant of that Valley. As these Negroes migrated from the Nile Valley to other parts of Africa, they were already a compound of various cultures and they took with them important elements of these cultures. Architecture and sculpture were elements of these cultures. The historian, the archaeologist and the anthropologist has never doubted that structures as Great Zimbabwe were constructed by Africans. It is the politician, for political reasons, who would like the public to continue thinking in terms of Phoenicians or Greeks or some other foreign product of a known ancient civilization and never the African, as the builders of such constructions.

Whilst the bird symbolizes the Dziva-Hungwe Family, the snake symbolizes the Soko Family. This is also important, because carvings and paintings of one serpent or another have been found in many parts of Africa. The Soko Family picked on the baboon and monkey for their totemic animals. After death, the spirits of their ancestors associated with lions (mhondoro) and this is why, in Zimbabwe, all the big ancestral spirits ranging from founding ancestors of dynasties to the great national spirits such as Chaminuka, are known as mhondoro (lions). In addition to association with land animals, the Soko Family also associated itself with land serpents. For Zimbabweans, there are certain snakes that are never to be killed or molested if they enter a home or

hut. This is so because our great ancestors associated themselves with snakes and are actually believed to visit our homes disguised as snakes. To give a few examples, the blind worm (which the Shona look upon as a snake) is believed to represent the youngest of our great ancestors; a snake with stripes on its back and called MASERWE in Shona, represents older and more powerful ancestors; a spotted snake called BVUNBI by the Shona represents the spirits associated with rain; the python, by virtue of its size and "innocence" (it does not normally bite) represents the oldest and most powerful national spirits, called MAJUKWA by the Shona.

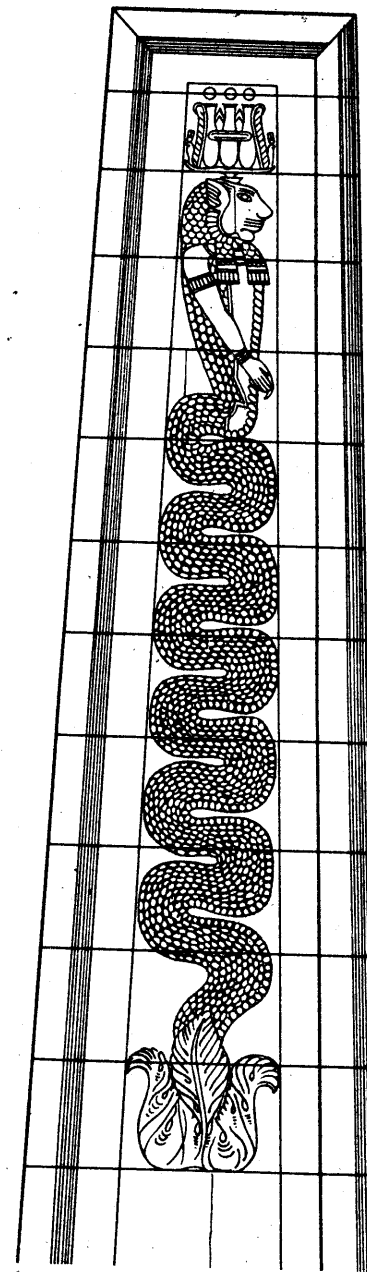
There can be no doubt that members of the Great Soko Family associated themselves with snakes. Even this day when Jukwa spirits take possession of mediums, the mediums themselves glide like snakes. I have personally seen this many times. Here is a report from a lady missionary who actually witnessed the possession by three spirits one of which was a Jukwa spirit, of a woman in the Masvingo area of Zimbabwe — the lady missionary was trying to "expel" these spirits from the communicant, "But one very persistent one I think has not gone.

He (the spirit) speaks Shona from Matopos near Bulawayo. His name is Shoko, he is from Mwari of Matojeni . . . This demon sneers at you or at the Word of God, and sometimes he laughs and cries and dislikes the smell of Europeans. At times he glides like a snake. This one is called Jukwa by the Vakaranga". (28)

This does not mean possession of a human being by the spirit of a snake. It means possession of a human being by a spirit of a man who had associations with snakes. The report suggests that the name of the Jukwa spirit is Shoko (Soko). As we should know by now, Soko is not a name but a totem, because the "Masters of the Land" chose to identify themselves with the baboon and monkey way back in north-east Africa. Thus any snake carving or painting in Africa is most likely to depict the presence in that locality of a segment or segments of the Great Soko Family. Whatever culture is represented by that carving is very likely to be the culture of a segment of the Great Soko Family.

One other animal associated with the Mbire Soko Family was the lion. It was the symbol of power and fierceness. It was a land animal and thus associated with The Masters of the Land. To this day, anyone who has an inkling of Shona traditional religion knows that this animal is associated with ancestral spirits more than any other. Some of these spirits are believed to disguise themselves in the form of lions. The Shona believe that there are lions which can be called ancestral lions. All the founding ancestors of dynasties, the older spirits and most of the spirits emanating from chiefs are called MHONDORO and this means "lion".

What is not known is that this association with lions did not start in Zimbabwe but in Kush. The lion was the emblem of a powerful Kushite spirit (sometimes referred to as a god) called Apedemek. The most famous temple in Kush was



N.B.: "Note the division of the snake tail into three pointing to the Bantu TRINITY as depicted by the Cover Design."

the Lion Temple. Tame lions are believed to have been bred in Kush and these were kept at the Lion Temple which was built in honour of Apedemek. Lion carvings were made in his honour. When the Soko Family migrated away from Kush, they took this symbolism with them and continued to associate with the Lion. To this day, they do so at least in this country. But lion carvings have been dug up in many parts of Africa. Furthermore, association with the lion is known to prevail in far more than Zimbabwe. This is living evidence of Kushitic origins of the Bantu people. Furthermore, association with the lion helps us to discover some of the Bantu segments of Soko origins for such groups are segments of The Masters of the Land. Figure I represents the Merotic (Meroe was the capital of Kush) Lion God. It is interesting to note that the God has the body of a snake and the head of a lion. This is not surprising since both the snake and the lion symbolize the same family. The Masters of the Land. If therefore you come across ancient carvings or moulds of lions and snakes, you can almost be certain that you have come across occupation sites of segments of the Soko Family. The existence of the Lion Temple and Lion God, both central features of Kush, further suggest the dominance of the Soko Family in Kush and this remained the position up to the Mohammedan invasion and Bantu explosion of about 640 A.D. Maps 4, 5 and 6 make this very clear. This is why the Sokos trailed behind the Dzivas and the Tonga in the migrations to both the south and the west.

After this background material, let us go back to North-East Africa and see what architecture existed there about the time the Bantu started their dispersal to the rest of Africa. The pyramids are well-known to be an ancient feature of north-east Africa. But these concern Egypt and Kush only and nowhere else in Africa were they constructed. Because I am interested in common cultural features of the Bantu world, these pyramids are irrelevant here. However, the knowledge and skill that brought the pyramids into existence, was not applied in the construction of pyramids only and did not end with the construction of the last pyramid. The existence of these pyramids in Egypt and the Sudan is evidence of skills in drystone building. The same skills could be diverted to the construction of other structures needed for other purposes. The important point to note is that skills in drystone construction started off as a feature of the Nile Valley. From here, the knowledge spread to other parts of the continent as the Bantu migrated from the Valley.

I have explained that the Great Bantu Explosion resulting in the birth of Bantu Africa took place after 600 A.D. If this is correct, then all the drystone constructions and terracing outside the Nile Valley should be features of the period after 600 A.D. Indeed there is good archaeological evidence to prove that every major drystone construction anywhere else outside the Nile Valley was constructed after 600 A.D.

The practice of hillside terracing appears to have started in southern Arabia. From here, it spread to the horn of Africa. It is almost certain that it was brought to the horn of Africa by Arabs who established the kingdom of Axum.

Between 300 and 400 A.D. we saw Axum invading and conquering Kush. In this way, the technique of hillside terracing spread into the Nile region. But Ethiopia (Axum was part of Ethiopia) remained the centre of this practice. It was from there that it spread to the other regions of Africa. Incidentally, the practice is not dead in Ethiopia even to this day. The following report by Bent gives an indication of the importance and significance of this practice:

"All the surrounding hills have been terraced for cultivation . . . Nowhere in Greece or Asia Minor have I seen such an enormous extent of terraced mountains as in this Abyssinian valley (the Yeha valley). Hundreds of thousands of acres must have been under the most careful cultivation, and now nothing is left but regular lines of the sustaining walls". This report was made in 1893. It gives an indication of the extent or importance of the practice of terracing in Ethiopia. Ethiopia is a mountainous country and something along these lines was necessary if meaningful agriculture was to be practised. The beginning of the practice in the country is accounted for by the early settlement in the region of migrants from southern Arabia. These newcomers were certainly in the Horn of Africa by 300 A.D. and were shortly to vanquish Kush, the Negro kingdom, and cause something bordering on African dispersion from the Nile Valley.

What is important for our purposes is that hillside terracing did not end in the Horn of Africa. The Great Bantu Explosion started around 640 A.D. The Bantu people started to scatter from the Nile Valley in westerly and southerly directions as a result of the onslaught of the Moslems. As they migrated from the Valley, they took their skills with them and one of them was certainly hillside terracing.

South of Ethiopia, along the Kenya-Tanganyika border, has been discovered a ruined ancient city thought to have contained a population of between thirty and forty thousand. This ruined city is now called Engaruka. Drystone construction and terracing were found to be prominent features of Engaruka. The archaeologist, Dr. Leakey, made the following report on this ancient city, "The houses of the main city are all upon very well-made stone walls. The terraces include pathways, terraces and house terraces . . . There is a vast mesh of stone walls and terraces in the valley ruins which I take to be connected in some way with cultivation and irrigation, but this is not proved."

This makes it clear that hillside terraces did not remain a feature of Ethiopia only. This went hand in hand with irrigation and both became features of Tanganyika and Kenya. But which way did these skills start? Huntingford gives us a clue: "Irrigation by means of such canals . . . is still practised by the Suk of Maraket . . . on the west escarpment of the Rift Valley. They are too barbarous to have learnt it themselves and it is probably an Azanian legacy". We are back in Azania, our old kingdom of Kush.

Huntingford thinks that civilization associated with this terracing, irrigation, iron-smelting and drystone building in Kenya and Tanganyika, started around 700 A.D. "We may surmise that a civilization which flourished in the Horn of

Africa at some time during the first seven hundred years A.D. was destroyed by Islam, that its makers retreated southwards through Kenya, and that it finally came to an end somewhere about the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries, possibly earlier".

Islam became a force after the death of Mohammed in 632 A.D. The retreat of the Azanians into Kenya and Tanganyika as a result of the activities of the Moslems can only have started after 632. But I have no quarrel with Huntingford on this conjecture. I have argued earlier that the Great Bantu Explosion was too sudden and too explosive and could only have been caused by serious crises or series of crises in the Nile Valley. I proceeded to examine the crises that troubled the region and came to the firm conclusion that the Bantu Explosion took place after 600 A.D. and that it was caused by the activities of the Moslems after the death of Mohammed. This is precisely the conclusion Huntingford arrives at in the above quotation. It is clear, too, that the cultural elements of Azanian civilization were not diffused over Africa independently of the Azanians themselves. The civilization did not "flow" out of the valley into Africa; the Azanians themselves took it out of the valley to the rest of Africa. Its makers retreated southwards through Kenya, Huntingford told us. But did they end in Kenya? Furthermore, did they retreat southwards only? Did none of them go westwards? Why should they all have migrated southwards only and who is there in the south anyway? It is representatives of the three Great Bantu Families — Dziva-Hungwe, Soko and Tonga. But we have seen segments of the same three families in West Africa and of course in central Africa.

Further south, in eastern Zimbabwe and western Mozambique, we come across constructions and terraces that immediately remind us of Ethiopia and Engaruka. About them, Davidson writes, "These many forts and dwellings, store-pits and terraced hillsides of eastern Rhodesia and western Mozambique are now known to extend across an area of 2 000 or 3 000 square miles and a proper inspection of Mozambique may yet reveal them as still more extensive." These are the constructions and terraces known as Niekerk and Inyanga. Concerning Niekerk Davidson writes, "Here too the hills were terraced with astonishing care, to within a few feet of their summits. Here too, there are a few places within this large area where it is possible to walk ten yards without stumbling on a wall, a building or an artificial heap of stones. And here too the craftsmanship in drystone building was admirably conceived."

The man who investigated both Niekerk and Inyanga and reported on them was MacIver. He even saw evidence of irrigation at Inyanga and reported "a high-level conduit, by which the water could be carried along the side of a hill and allowed to descend more gradually than the parent stream. There are very many such conduits in the Inyanga region and they often run for several miles. The gradients are admirably calculated, with a skill which is not always equalled by modern engineers with their elaborate instruments. The dams are well and strongly built of unworked stones without mortar, the conduits themselves are simple trenches about one metre in depth."

One can immediately understand why people like Posselt, Bent and the members of the B.S.A.C. found it impossible to believe that Africans are responsible for all this evidence of a somewhat sophisticated culture. Unfortunately, no dateable material has been discovered and it has not been possible to say when the first occupations and constructions at both Niekerk and Inyanga might have taken place. It is however thought that the first occupations might have occurred around 600 A.D. or so, and this early Iron Age occupation has been divided into two periods called Ziwa I and Ziwa II. Would it be too much to call them Dziva I and Dziva II?

However, most of the terraces, constructions and irrigation conduits are thought to be features of the 17th or 18th century. It is clear that much more archaeological work is needed in this area. In any case, what is interesting is the glaring evidence of constructions, terraces and irrigation works that are so similar to what we have come across in Ethiopia and Engaruka at the Kenya-Tanganyika border. This has persuaded some scholars to call this culture "the southern Azanian culture." Indeed, Azanian it was, not only because its architects originated in Azania, but because they were themselves descendants of Azanians — or Kushites.

In Western Uganda, a fortress very similar to Great Zimbabwe has been found and reported on. This is called Bigo. Even some of its pots and beads have been discovered to be very similar to those of Great Zimbabwe. About them, Davidson says, "The resemblances with Zimbabwe are so striking as to seem more than a coincidence: where the builders of Zimbabwe built in abundant local stone, those of Bigo, having no stone available, built in earth." To this, Waylands adds, "Bigo is far more primitive than Zimbabwe, though it is almost certainly younger, yet both are, so to say, growths from the self-same stem. Bigo was a late abortive bud and Zimbabwe an early flower and both are Bantu. In the last analysis their cultures spring from a common root."

The scholars' verdict on Great Zimbabwe is now necessary. The Phoenician school has no substance in its arguments; the champions of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba have no substance either. There is archaeological evidence of occupation at Zimbabwe Hill before 1 000 A.D. The archaeologists have suggested that stone constructions on the hill started around 1075 — plus or minus 150 years. I think it would not be claiming too much to say that the present unfolding of Shona history has settled the arguments over Great Zimbabwe, with regard to who constructed the fort and when he did so.

In "From Mutapa to Rhodes" I argued that any evidence of Iron Age occupation at Zimbabwe Hill before 1 000 A.D. is evidence of Dziva-Hungwe occupation; any evidence of occupation after 1 000 A.D. represents Mbire Soko occupation. This is so because, as I stressed in the above book, the earliest known Bantu people to occupy the region south of the Zambezi River were definitely members of the Dziva-Hungwe Family. The Bushmen, of course, came into the region long before the Dziva-Hungwe people, but they were not Bantu nor were they an Iron Age people. These Dziva-Hungwe people were then invaded

by the Mbire Soko people around 1 000 A.D. It was these Mbire Soko people who established the Mutapa Empire; it was they who started stone constructions on Zimbabwe Hill. The man who organized the first constructions was Chigwangu who, as a result, earned for himself the name RUSVINGO because he had constructed an imposing fort for himself. After the death of his elder brother, Mutapa I, he became Mutapa II and the capital of the new Mbire Soko Empire shifted from Mutuisinazita in the Wedza-Marandellas area to Great Zimbabwe. Because Rusvingo was a brother and not a son or grandson of Mutapa I who occupied the country around 1 000 A.D., he could not have started to construct the fort after 1050 because the gap between them in terms of years must have been small. For this reason, I argued that Great Zimbabwe must have been in existence by about 1025 A.D. Of course additions were made to the fort after the initial constructions and they were made after the death of Rusvingo. Any evidence of occupation at Great Zimbabwe after 1 000 A.D. must necessarily represent Mbire Soko occupation. The Mbire Soko people drove the Dziva-Hungwe predecessors to the south and west of the country. We have discovered that about 90% of the present Tswana people of Botswana are members of the Dziva-Hungwe people; we have discovered that no less than 90% of the Bantu people in South Africa are members of the same Dziva-Hungwe Family. Can this be surprising when we know that they were the first Bantu people to occupy the region south of the Zambezi River and that they were driven to the south around 1 000 A.D. by the invading Mbire Soko people? Are their overwhelming numbers in the regions south and west of Zimbabwe not very strong evidence of their precedence south of the Zambezi over everybody else?

The important point to note here is that all the evidence of Iron Age culture associated with Great Zimbabwe is evidence of Bantu occupation and Bantu culture. The first qualified archaeologist to examine Great Zimbabwe was Randall MacIver, who did so in 1905. His verdict was that, in the architecture of Great Zimbabwe, "There is not a trace of Oriental or European style of any period whatever. The character of the dwellings contained within the stone walls, and forming an integral part of them, is unmistakably African; the arts and manufactures exemplified by objects found within the dwelling are typically African, except when the objects are imports of well-known medieval or post-medieval date." This verdict was rejected by the "Phoenician school" which continued its propaganda that the great fort could never have been constructed by Africans. As a result of this controversy, Britain sent Dr. Gertrude Caton-Thompson to re-examine the fort. Her verdict was, "Examination of all evidence gathered from every quarter still can produce not one single item that is not in accordance with the claim of Bantu origin and medieval date." Elsewhere, she added, "I am definitely unable to fall in with the oft-repeated and compromising suggestion that Zimbabwe and its allied structures were built by native workmen under the direction of a superior alien race of supervisor." About trading connections with the east coast, she wrote, "The trade connection with India is undoubtedly strong — indeed I believe it to be the primary stimulus which led to the development of the indigenous Zimbabwe culture."

In spite of all this, the "Phoenician school" remained adamant and as late as 1980, we find politicians of the old order still harking back to the Phoenicians, King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba as responsible for the construction of Great Zimbabwe. Their reasons are of course not academic but political. The reasoning was undoubtedly that no credit should be given to an African, because it becomes a source of pride and arrogance. If the Africans came to know that their ancestors constructed Great Zimbabwe, it would be a source of unity when what the colonial administration was after, was to keep us as divided as possible. Of course the existence of similar structures in other parts of Africa was not known. Great Zimbabwe was therefore looked upon as unique. But now that we know about Ethiopia, Engaruka, Bigo, Inyanga, Niekerk and Mupungubwe, are the Phoenician theorists going to insist that all these structures and many more were built by Phoenicians? Can they say this without suggesting that Africa was once virtually a Phoenician "colony?" Now that we know that all the constructions, terraces and irrigation in Africa were features of the period after 600 A.D., is it logical to continue supporting the Phoenician school? What Phoenicians were there in Africa around 800 or 1 000 A.D.? There can be no scholar worth the name who bothers to spend a minute on this theory any longer.

Just south of the Limpopo River in the Transvaal of today, was discovered the fortress of Mupungubwe by a farmer called van Graan in 1932. Although smaller and less imposing, it is very reminiscent of Great Zimbabwe and can be no more than an "off-shoot" of the Zimbabwe culture in the way that Nalitali, Khami and DhloDhlo are "off-shoots" of the Zimbabwe culture. Van Graan and his colleagues found beads, bits and pieces of iron, copper and even gold. An exciting search followed and more occupation sites were found of the Mupungubwe type. In 1934, van Tonder discovered an extensive "grave-area" which in fact was a royal cemetery associated with the west and east of Mupungubwe. He found more gold and more bits and pieces of metal. There was no doubt that the builders of Mupungubwe were an Iron Age Bantu people. I believe it may not be long before we know the name of the man who organized the construction of Mupungubwe.

I hinted in "From Mutapa to Rhodes" that the great Shona mhondoro, Chaminuka, had recruited as one of his juniors the Mbire Soko man who pursued the Dziva-Hungwe people south of the Limpopo River to establish himself as the regional ruler of the most southerly Mbire Mutapa Province. This man is thought to be the grandson or great-grandson of Rusvingo, the builder of Great Zimbabwe. I intimated that the family concerned had been asked to look for the skin of a lion for this ancestor. Unfortunately, the fruition of this development has been delayed by the war that has been raging in Zimbabwe. But rituals have now been resumed and we should know, possibly by the end of 1982, much more about Mupungubwe and the founding ancestor of this southern Mbire Province. The founders of Mupungubwe were not independent of Great Zimbabwe and must be looked upon as a segment of those that constructed Great Zimbabwe.

We have seen much of dry-stone building, terracing and irrigation works along the whole eastern belt of Africa from Ethiopia to S. Africa. But is there anything like it in West Africa? "Terraced hillside cultivation and irrigation was to be an integral and imposing aspect of early civilizations in east and south-east Africa. They had long existed in southern Arabia where the whole of that gleaming fabric of urbanity had depended on making a little wafer go a long way, and on conserving the soil of steep hillsides. Hillside terracing may still be seen, on a great scale even today as far as western Darfur. Surveyors in 1958 found it abandoned for the most part, over an area of some 12 000 sq. miles from the sub-Sahara hills of the Jebel Marra and Mebel Marra's dead volcano where no one lives or cultivates today." (29)

This makes it clear that the cultural elements of Azanian civilization associated with dry-stone buildings, terracing and irrigation are not confined to the eastern half of Africa from Ethiopia to S. Africa. This is because the Azanians did not only spread to southern Africa after 600 A.D. but also went to the region west of the Nile Valley. We have discovered their presence in those regions through the cultural elements considered earlier; we now discover their presence there through architecture.

I am by no means the first one to see that this architecture appears to have a common parentage. York Mason writes, "All the structures appear to be of the same period and to have emerged fully-fledged from some previous design." Mason here makes two important points: the structures appear to have originated from the same parentage and they cropped up all over Africa at about the same time. This is in fact the theme of his book. He is not the only scholar who has been impressed by this. "Various and contrasting though they were, the foundations of Zimbabwe go back to much the same period as the foundations of Ghana.

The initial raising of the walls of the Acropolis and the elliptical building was not much later than the time when Mali grew strong, and Timbuktu and Djenne saw their transformation into seats of thought and learning. The miles of careful terracing and the hill-top forts and store-pits and stone dwellings of Niekerk and Inyanga were made while Mohammed Askia and his successors ruled the western Sudan." (30)

This is precisely what all these chapters have been about and this is only possible if the Bantu migrations started about the same time. We cannot deny that these Africans migrated in definite directions and from a particular centre or region. There is archaeological evidence that by the year 400 A.D. people with Nilotic (Kushitic) cultural traits had reached the Darfur region west of the Nile; there is archaeological evidence to prove that by the year 700 A.D. people with Nilotic cultural traits had reached the Lake Chad region; there is evidence that by 850 A.D. people with Nilotic cultural traits had reached the western Sudan proper and that the Ghana Empire had already taken shape. Coming down to the south from the Horn of Africa evidence is conclusive that dry-stone building, terracing, irrigation and even Christianity became features of

Ethiopia before they affected any other region to the south. But by 700 A.D. these Ethiopian cultural traits had affected Kenya and even Tanganyika as is evidenced by Engaruka. By 900 A.D. they had become features of the region south of the Zambezi River as is proved by Niekerk and Inyanga. By 1100, even Great Zimbabwe was in existence and Mupungubwe was shortly to appear. All this means that the Africans did not radiate into Africa from several corners or "radiation" centres of the continent. It must mean at the same time that the force accounting for this sudden explosion must be a common one and this must be Islam.

I am not suggesting that the west African Bantu are identical in cultural traits to the Zambians or Zimbabweans; I am not suggesting that the Zairese are identical to the Tswana or Namibians in cultural traits. What I have said and insist on saying is that they are similar and that this similarity is not accidental or coincidental but has a common parentage. Differences there must be. The Bantu who migrated into all Africa were not mechanical machines but were human beings — and intelligent human beings — who continued to develop and to adapt themselves to new situations. They did not remain static nor did they develop and adapt at the same rate and exactly along the same lines. Situations were different and so was the resourcefulness of their leaders. We well know that Europe was very much influenced by Greek civilization; we know that Europe was very much influenced by Roman civilization; but by 1500 Britain was not exactly what Germany or Russia was in cultural terms; by 1800 France was not exactly what Britain or Italy was in cultural terms. All these countries developed at different rates and along somewhat different lines because of their own particular environments and the different forces that impinged on them in spite of their common Greek or Roman culture. All this is equally true of Africa and therefore what we expect is similarity and not identity; and similarity there is plenty. "So immediately similar in their use of stone for dwellings, irrigation, soil conservation; in their mining and metal work; in their knowledge of widely various pharmacopoeia; in their fusion of tribal law and custom with an inter-tribal and tribute-paying system of centralized power; in their trading habits; in their cultivation of new plants and fruits which had come from outside Africa; even in their indigenous pottery -- were all these cultures of a common origin?" (31) The answer to this question is a positive and emphatic "yes". I have quoted the above to demonstrate the extent to which other scholars also see what I have called "the unity of Africa." The important thing to remember is not only that this unity exists but also that it is accounted for by common origins.

(7) TRADITIONAL RELIGION

Nowhere on the continent do the Africans demonstrate greater unity than in traditional religion. The original Kushitic language spoken by the Bantu in the Nile Valley has evolved in different parts of Africa and regions speak languages incomprehensible to each other; for instance, the South African Bantu have

adopted the Khoisan clicks. The Egyptian ancient Sun-worship has disappeared almost altogether and is detected only in the earliest ancestors when they take up mediums who actually practised it many centuries ago; ancient Christianity acquired way back in the Horn of Africa has disappeared almost completely and is only associated with the earliest ancestors, as we have seen in Zimbabwe, who actually practised it; by 1980, dry-stone building, terracing and hillside irrigation had come to a halt except in very few and isolated places and are only detectable through earlier constructions, some of which have become permanent features of the continent. But traditional religion, although it has also to some extent evolved, has remained largely intact and was, even up to the time of colonization, the greatest and most powerful African force to be reckoned with. Even today, the foreign scholar has come to recognise it as a force of no mean magnitude. Those who are of the opinion that African traditional religion is dead — killed by westernisation since the days of colonization — are much mistaken. The unfolding of ancient African history that we are witnessing here is itself a result of the strength and revival of African traditional religion. The chief religious (or spiritual) personages are also the chief historical figures in every African community. This being so, the unfolding of African religion must necessarily mean the unfolding of important aspects of African history. Many of my own historical findings have come to light because of the greatest unfolding of African religion in Zimbabwe since 1890. If religious developments now taking place in Zimbabwe were to be repeated in a few more African countries, I do not doubt that in a matter of a few years we will have unearthed most of the important threads of African history way back to Kush.

Divine Kingship is alive in Africa, true enough; but this is only an aspect of African traditional religion and this is why it is more alive today than the other cultural traits that we have examined. It is unfortunate that scholars have so far not looked upon it as such but this does all the same not mean that they have been right. Destroy the main corner-stone of African traditional religion and divine kingship will die a natural death. Even the King or chief himself will cease to be a religious figure.

Colonialism and its son, Christianity, have made considerable inroads against religion ever since their advent, but they have failed to change the essential structure and character of this traditional religion. I am afraid that the Christian missionaries and their agents have been too easily satisfied by shadows rather than by the substance. They have been misled by figures appearing on their registers. I look upon these figures as representing the outer man — the outer African — but not necessarily the inner man. In Christian terms, I look upon the outer man as the shadow and the inner man as the substance. The fact that so many have turned up for church services does not necessarily mean that the same number of inner men has been spiritually involved. The fact that so many have turned up for baptism does not mean that an equal number of inner men has been converted to Christianity.

The African himself knows well that there are many reasons for which he seeks baptism and for which he may turn up at a Christian church service. I know of many teachers who were kicked out of certain denominational schools in this country because they had refused to be baptised as members of those particular denominations. They had originally been accepted as teachers, in the hope that they were going to relent. There are many denominational schools in Zimbabwe for instance which, up to independence in 1980, would not accept any children whose parents and themselves were not members of their denominations.

Furthermore, both primary and secondary education in Zimbabwe as elsewhere in Africa, has been almost entirely in mission hands. The first government primary school for Africans ever to be established in Zimbabwe was Mzilikazi in 1946; the first government secondary school for Africans was Goromonzi also in 1946. All the familiar primary and secondary government schools that are in the country today date from 1956 on. But this was only in urban areas. The rural areas have remained predominantly in the hands of the missionaries. The headmaster of each school had at least to be a lay evangelist if not an ordained evangelist for him to get his post. He had to create at least an outward appearance that he was a genuine evangelist in order to retain his appointment. The teachers under him had to create the same appearance if they were to keep their jobs or avoid victimization by the church through the headmaster. The parents wanted their children to go to school and they too had to assume an air of religiosity and had to demonstrate this by turning up for church services. The children were literally forced into it and had no option, since they had to go to school.

The result of all this was that each denomination baptised huge numbers of Africans each year; each "converted" equally huge numbers; each registered huge numbers on its rolls. But was it the inner African who had been converted? Were these missionaries not processing mainly shadows rather than the substance? What is important is what these Africans did after attending the church service. Did they not carry on with their traditional rituals after baptism? Did they not continue to visit the traditional doctor after the church service and in the hour of need? If so, had the denominations concerned converted the inner or the outer African? Rituals were indeed conducted by these Africans secretly or at night, or in a different guise in order to avoid the wrath of the teacher, the headmaster, the lay evangelist or the missionary himself. Long distances were covered to visit traditional doctors in areas where one was unknown, for the reason. This does not mean that the missionary have converted the inner African; this does not mean that traditional religion was dead but had gone underground. It cannot be doubted that some created the appearance of being eager church members because they made monetary profits out of their positions. This situation prevails to this day.

(a) THE UNITY OF TRADITIONAL RELIGION

Religion is the heart of the traditional African and this is the area in which traditional Africans are most united. This, at the same time, emphasizes the extent to which Africa -- Bantu Africa -- is united. Parrinder, in his "African Traditional Religion" quotes the following:—

"An authority on Malawi writes, "No approach to any appreciation of indigenous ideas regarding God can take any path but that through the thought-area occupied by the ancestors." To this, Cullen Young adds, "To us the idea of ancestral priority has just no meaning, but to these older African men and women in the backland villages, life from day to day, and we might legitimately say, from moment to moment, has no meaning at all apart from ancestral presence and ancestral power." Parrinder refers to South Africa, — "The ancestor spirits are the most intimate gods of the Bantu; they are part of the family or tribe and are considered and consulted on all important occasions." In Zambia, — "The family divinities are the ghosts of one's grandfathers, grandmothers, father and mother, uncles and aunts, brothers and sisters." In Nigeria, "all the Ibo believe that their lives are profoundly influenced by their ancestors, and this belief has far-reaching sociological consequences . . . Sacrifice has to be offered to them at regular intervals, or when the diviner indicates." In southern Ghana, "in the everyday life of the Ga, the dead are very present . . . Most people, as a regular habit, never drink, and many never eat, without throwing a small portion on the ground for their forefathers." In Sierra Leone, "prayer is normally offered through a succession of ancestors. Two distinct groups of ancestors are worshipped — those ancestors whose names and feats are known . . . and those who died in the far distant past." In the Sudan, "We can only understand the place of the kingship in Shilluk society when we realize that it is not the individual at any time reigning who is king (nor is it any family head who rules) but Nyikang (the greatest founding ancestor) who is the medium between man and God, and is believed in some way to participate in God as he does in the King." In Zimbabwe, — "There can be no meaningful communication with the Creator without going through a hierarchy of ancestors." On Africa in general, "All over Africa, when the land is tilled and planted, the blessing of the spirits is demanded. Then when the crop is ripe, there are most important First-fruit ceremonies of which the essential principle is that the spirits must eat of the fruits before men partake of them. These have been called "rites of primogeniture" since the spirits, if deprived of their priority in the hierarchy, would take revenge by threatening the harvest . . . The African community is a single, continuing unit, conscious of no distinction in quality between its members still HERE on earth, and its members now THERE, wherever it may be that the ancestors are living."

From all this, can we doubt that Bantu Africa is indeed united in traditional religion? Hilda Kuper, writing on South Africa, states, "The piling up of ethnographic detail produces an impression of chaos where there is in fact only variation on a few themes. African societies can be broadly classified into a

limited number of economic and political types and the difference between the most varied African tribes is slight when compared with the difference between the most highly specialized African society and developed industrial societies. By comparison, African tribal societies are relatively undifferentiated and homogeneous." To this, Parrinder adds, "This great comparative homogeneity of African society is apparent in the religious sphere."

There are misconceptions in some of the above quotations. For instance, many ancestors are referred to as gods, ghosts and the like; it is suggested that African worship ancestors. But what is important is that Africa demonstrates amazing unity in religion and that this unity is not and cannot be accidental.

We cannot talk about the unity of Africa in religion without discussing her unity in politics. This is so because, as we saw under "Divine Kingship," an African state is a theocracy and not a secular state. The king is the central political figure and at the same time is the most important religious figure in the polity. But that same polity is an economic and social polity. Here again, the king is the head. For instance, it was the duty of the king or chief to see that the rituals for supplicating for rain, the "first-fruits" and "harvest festivals" or rituals were organized. If the king neglected them, the African believed that the religious forces concerned would be enraged and would hit back by "drying up" the skies, in which case no rain would fall. The famine that might follow would certainly have political and social repercussions on the kingdom. Therefore, the organization of such rituals was not looked upon by the African as purely economic. It was political, economic, social and religious. Each such kingdom worthy of the name had a paramount chief (or king) at its head; it had regional chiefs below the king; it had district chiefs below the regional chiefs; these in turn had sub-chiefs or ward chiefs under them; the kraal heads were next in the hierarchy and then came village elders below whom were commoners. At the bottom were slaves or people who could be categorized as slaves. This was feudalism and it was a feature of most if not all kingdoms in Africa. This again emphasizes the total homogeneity of traditional Africa — total in the sense that the similarities pervaded not one but every aspect of the life of the kingdom.

(b) THE IDEA OF GOD

The one element of African culture that is least understood and that has been subjected to greatest distortions, is traditional religion. I have just stated above that in treating religion one is dealing with the real African; everything else is peripheral. The idea of talking about politics here, economics there and religion or social life over there, is a feature of Europe and not of traditional Africa. This can only be appreciated if it is again realized that an African state was a theocracy and not a secular state.

I personally questioned many missionaries over the years on why they were doing nothing about the political situation that existed in Zimbabwe before independence. The answer I was given by many of them was that the church

had nothing to do with politics. Zimbabweans may also remember the numbers of aspersions cast against some missionaries by our European politicians for making political statements. They may remember too how many clergymen and other dignitaries were deported from this country for "joining" politics. This perpetuates the notion — absurd to the African — that religion can live apart from politics; that a compartmentalized life was possible. It may be possible in Europe or America; it may be possible in modern Africa today. But it was not possible in traditional Africa and it was highly artificial. To the African, all aspects of life were inseparably inter-woven with religion as the cementing force. Remove religion from life and everything disintegrates. This can be easily appreciated if it is realized that the political leaders were also the leaders of every other aspect of life. The most important leaders were the departed members of each community. But these are also the very characters who were the chief religious figures in each community. They are venerated today because of their religious authority. That religious authority was determined by their political authority as the founding fathers of their various communities. But the communities they founded had economic and social elements as well and hence they were founders of political, economic, social and religious politics. By virtue of this, the living head of an African state was a vicar, with the founding and departed ancestors as the owners and real rulers of that state. This explains why and how an African state was a theocracy. The king was divine because in him were combined the powers of titular head of the state and those of the founding ancestor to whom he was heir and vicar.

All this was highly nebulous to the early missionary and the colonial administrator. The position was worsened by their strong feelings that there was nothing good in the African system. The immediate aim was to throw overboard everything that the African stood for. No time was spared to understand the system. Yet at the same time, after staying in Africa for a few years and after managing to speak smatterings of a vernacular language, these missionary and colonial authorities looked upon themselves as experts on the African and African customs and traditions. They were quick to put on paper what they thought represented the African and in this way distorted what the African stood for. No foreign scholar can legitimately claim to know and understand the African — the traditional African — if he does not see and understand traditional religion in the right perspective. It is not enough to observe what Africans do in religious circles and claim that you understand them and their religion. To observe and record a Catholic mass is not necessarily to study and understand Christianity no matter how many such masses you observe and record. What makes the position worse for the foreign observer is that even the majority of the Africans themselves may be unable to explain intelligently and intelligibly why they do what they do, other than that they have been advised to do it and that they are doing it according to tradition. But the foreign scholar, the early missionary and the administrator were quick to make conclusions of their own, drawn from a western angle, and put them on paper for general consumption. In this way, serious misconceptions were accepted.

The foreign scholar who can legitimately claim to understand and know the traditional African has himself to be "Africanised". This means that he has not only to live with Africans in a traditional setting from an early age but has to live as an African and be reared as an African. In this way, he becomes an African in culture but remains an American or Asian or European in complexion. Regrettably, in view of the political circumstances that have prevailed in colonial Africa, this has not been possible. The result has been that much of what has been written about the African has been put on paper by scholars on a "flying shuttle". They must stay in Uganda for not more than a month; in Zambia for two weeks; in Nigeria for six weeks and in Zimbabwe for three weeks or else they fall behind schedule. Alternatively, they do their research by proxy — by employing agents who go about collecting the material for them. They then proceed to claim to know and understand the African.

Let us now examine the African idea or ideas of God. There can be no doubt that belief in God is universal in Africa and modern scholars are alive to this fact today, unlike their predecessors. The debate is largely now over whether Africans are monotheistic or polytheistic. There are not two or three Gods in Africa. There is only one God, the all-pervading God, the Creator and the source of all power. In the quotations above, we have seen ancestors being referred to as "the African gods" and "ghosts"; these are among the serious misconceptions referred to earlier. Differences there are between communities, but they are minor and cannot make Shona belief in God one religion and Njanja, Zulu, Xosa or Yoruba belief in God another religion. The Catholics differ from the Methodists; the Salvationists do not conduct their services after the Dutch Reformed fashion. But we do not talk of these organizations as religions. We call them denominations and some would use the word "sects". This is so because although there are differences between them, the essential ingredients of Christianity remain the same. Belief in one God for instance, is common to all of them. Belief in Christ is also common to all of them.

What essential religious attributes do the Shona have that set their beliefs apart from that of the Nyanja of Malawi? What essential differences exist between the Kikuyu and the Ibo of Nigeria and that make their beliefs a religion apart? This is precisely where the foreign scholar has created an appearance of chaos in Africa where surprising homogeneity in fact does exist.

The religious differences that do exist between African communities are largely results of different political developments, which were often caused by environmental circumstances. For instance, some communities lived in desert or semi-desert conditions and were forced by their environment to be nomadic. They had to split up into small groups because their ecology was incapable of sustaining high densities of people. As a result, highly structured communities were not possible. Communities such as these nomadic ones could not have highly structured religious systems and what they have may border on polytheism. On the other hand, other communities occupied well-watered and rich agricultural regions, that were capable of sustaining high densities of people. In this case,

highly structural political systems were possible. Consequently, their religious systems were also highly structured and were often monotheistic. Here and there such as in the Mutapa Empire, Ghana, Mali and Songhay, agriculture combined with trade. In this case, supra-tribal political structures called empires emerged. The political authority of the emperor transcended tribal boundaries. After death, such emperors became what we call territorial spirits, national spirits or divinities. Thus, the religious structure is clearly determined by the political structure, which was itself determined by environment. However, the essential ingredients have remained the same. For instance, belief in God has remained universal; belief in the power of the ancestor has also remained universal.

(c) THE ANCESTOR

The place and role of God in Africa can only be understood in relation to that of the ancestor. In Africa, God does not work independently of the ancestor. Likewise the ancestor cannot work independently of God.

In Africa some foreign scholars think that they have come across a "lazy God". They have seen Him as a "remote God who lives in idleness like a Negro king". They have seen a God who is indifferent to what happens on earth; a God too far and too remote to be of much significance to the African. Those interested in these views should read my "Dynamics of Traditional Religion," in which I devoted the biggest chapter to traditional religion and in which I quoted many of these views. To begin with, Bantu Africa (or all Negro Africa) has no special God of her own. If there is one Creator in the world — and the universe — that same Creator is also the God of Africa. Secondly, if He is remote at all, He is only so in terms of his Position vis-a-vis the living in the hierarchical order of creation. In terms of power and influences, He is as close to the African as the vest and shirt the African himself is wearing. Thirdly, in terms of industry, He is the most alert and the busiest Force that one can imagine. Fourthly, if He is indifferent to what happens on earth, then He is no God at all. The African himself believes that there is nothing that can move, nothing good that can happen, nothing that can remain normal without the intervention and presence of God. The African believes in an all-pervasive and all-powerful God — Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent.

The sources of the misconceptions of the foreign scholar are easy to detect. Indeed, it was not easy for him to see anything else. This is because in Africa, God has hierarchical chains of juniors through which He operates. These hierarchical chains consist of ancestors ranging from the oldest, furthest and most powerful to the youngest, nearest and least powerful. The oldest, furthest and most powerful are the nearest to God and therefore furthest from the living; the youngest, nearest and least powerful are the ones who died most recently and are therefore nearest to the living order but furthest in terms of distance in the hierarchy, from God.

The situation is what has misled the foreign scholar. In everyday operations, the living order deals with the youngest "juniors" who are nearest to it. These consist of the most recently deceased members of the family hierarchy and include the fathers, mothers (if they be dead), grandfathers, grandmothers, great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers. Some of them are personally known to the living order: Their interest in the well being of their living members is unquestionable. If they allow their own lines of descendants to die out, it means that they have allowed themselves to die out, which is unthinkable. The truly dead African is he who has no progeny and no one will accept this without a struggle. The greatest curse an African can have is failure to have descendants. If your line dies out at the level of grandchildren or great grandchildren, you become as dead as the man himself died without children. Each ancestor inevitably struggles to see his lines of descendants extending and all the descendants together generally making good progress. This can only happen if they are protected against all possible dangers that may threaten them and if he gives them all possible guidance and advice. Thus the living order knows how intensely interested in their descendants the ancestors are. These ancestors can only be indifferent to the welfare of the living at their own peril — at the risk of extinguishing themselves.

But all these immediate ancestors have no power of their own. There is no ancestor who can possibly be independent of the All-Pervasive Power who is God. Each major ancestor, such as the founding ancestor of a dynasty, is no more than "a power-distribution centre." He is a major link in the ancestral hierarchical chain.

The picture may be clearer if I use an electricity system as an analogy. Consider Zambia and the Kariba Hydro-electric power system. The Kariba Power Station is the source of Zambian electrical power. From Kariba, the main line leads to Lusaka. From Lusaka, one line branches off towards Livingstone; a second line goes to the east towards Fort Jameson; a third line travels west towards Barotseland; a fourth line continues to the Copperbelt. In this way, Lusaka becomes a major distribution centre. But each line from Lusaka has sub-distribution centres from which smaller lines radiate to the outlying areas. In these outlying areas are smaller distribution centres which serve all the regions in their vicinity. In the end, the whole of Zambia may be criss-crossed with power lines, of varying importance. The sub-stations at Monze or Mongu is not independent of the major power station in Lusaka. The minor power stations throughout the country are not independent of the sub-stations at Monze and Mongu; above all, none of these stations, including the Lusaka major distribution centre, is independent of Kariba.

What all these stations represent is not difficult to see in terms of African religion. Kariba is the source of all power and represents God; the Lusaka Major Distribution Centre represents the first human ancestor to be created by God; the four main power lines represent four sons of the first man who by virtue of their positions, become the first four founders of the major segments to descend from the first man. The sub-stations at Monze and Mongu represent

the regional capital of each line descending from the first man. The lines radiating from those regional capitals represent the major Houses and major chieftainships descending from the regional ancestors. All these chieftainships work under the general suzerainty of the regional founding ancestor. The minor stations established throughout the country and radiating from the sub-stations represent the districts each under a sub-chief or headman. The terminal stations represent the kraals and kraal-heads all under the direct control of sub-chiefs, and also the most recently deceased ancestors such as fathers, mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers.

Let us go back to our electricity analogy. Although everybody is fully aware that the source of all the electricity in Zambia is Kariba, very few have direct connections with Kariba proper; very few ever appeal for assistance to the authorities actually in charge of the power station at Kariba. In fact, very few even know how to contact these authorities directly. Those in the remote areas deal with the authority in charge of their terminal electricity stations that supply them. All emergency cases, all repair work and all payments are the concern of these authorities in charge of terminal stations.

What goes on between the stations that serve them and the Lusaka Major Distribution Centre is largely irrelevant to the ordinary consumer. The majority of the consumers may not even be aware that the immediate bosses of the sub-station masters are in Lusaka. But everybody is fully aware that all the electricity comes from Kariba. How the sub-station masters tap it from Kariba is none of their business. What they want is to be served with electricity and of course they know their men on the spot, the terminal station masters, the minor station masters and the sub-station masters. These are the officers who serve them. As long as these people get their electricity, Lusaka and Kariba are almost irrelevant to them.

Let us imagine for a moment that there was an electrical problem at one terminal station and one or two consumers rushed to Lusaka for help. These people will certainly be referred back to the terminal centre or minor station that serves the terminal centre. If the problem be a major one, they might be referred to the sub-station centre but this would be very unlikely. Certainly the Lusaka Major Distribution Centre will not give them technicians to accompany them back home to attend to their terminal problems. This is so not because Lusaka has no interest in the affairs of the rank and file of the people out in the rural areas but because there is a definite electricity hierarchy. Every member in the hierarchy is there to serve not himself but the people under him. Each member of the hierarchy must play his full part if the interests of the people are to be served to the maximum.

(d) **TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY**

African traditional religion has a definite philosophy which must be understood in order to understand all the complexities of the religion. This philosophy explains the emergence of the ancestral hierarchy, its importance in the day-to-day lives of the living order, and its relationship with the All-Pervasive Force which is God.

Africans believe that the living part of the created order does not know God, because God is at the top of a long and ever lengthening chain of the created order. On the other hand, the living part of the created order is at the very bottom of the chain. The chain is ever lengthening because new generations are born by the living part of the created order. The living are the most junior members of the whole hierarchy of human creation. In addition, they are totally physical and their "sight" is very short. They can see only what is immediately around them and only what is exposed to the physical eye. The dead part of the created order is different from and superior to the living. To begin with, the dead are older and nearer the source of creation than the living. Secondly, the dead are only physical in the sense that they were once physical human beings; they are now spirits like the Creator. Thirdly, the "sight" of the dead is much "longer". They can "see" more than is immediately around them, more than is exposed to the human eye; they can "see" what is to come in the future. They can ward off dangers threatening their progeny. All this makes the dead part of the created order superior to the living part. In terms of distance in the chain, the living are the farthest away from the Creator; in terms of power, "sight" and wisdom, the living are the most inferior in the whole chain. To the African, it would be odd for the most inferior to have direct links with the most superior and furthest, God. In addition, it would equally be odd for the living to claim to know the Greatest Force, the Most Superior of all Forces and the Furthest of all Forces. Inevitably, the living African admits that he does not know God and therefore direct communications with Him are out of question. This must be stressed.

The next point to understand is that although the African believes that he does not know God, he at the same time believes that there is somebody who knows God or who knows Him better than he himself. This is the first ancestor to be created, because God revealed Himself to His first human creation. The two were in direct touch and communicated directly. Without this direct communication, God's first human creation would never have known what to do for Him. For instance, he would not have known how to thank God for his creation and for all the blessings bestowed on him. By virtue of his first creation and his direct links with God, the first ancestor is the nearest to the Creating Power. He is also the oldest, the most powerful and the most superior link in this whole hierarchy of human creation because he is closest to the source of power, the Creator. He is only inferior to the Creating Power Itself.

The belief that God was in direct touch with the first man or first generation of human beings is widespread in Africa. Those interested in the details of the subject are referred to my "Dynamics of Traditional Religion" again. Whether this occurred here on earth or in heaven does not really matter. What does matter is that many Africans have myths that suggest that God was in direct touch with man; but as a result of the mischief or ambitions of some of the humans, He retreated into His own world or the humans were abandoned here on earth. From that point on, the created order started to live apart from the Creator, after having once known Him and His wishes. This is what is important in African theology.

The next stage concerns the direct descendants, the children of the first ancestor. These constituted the second generation of humans on earth. They did not know God directly but through their father. This father, the first ancestor, taught them what he could about God; he was the only one with direct instruction from Him regarding His wishes and how He was to be attended to. In this way, the first ancestor won a special status by virtue of his position — the status of being the intermediary between the Creator and the created order of which he was part.

The second generation had its own children. These children constituted the third generation of humans on earth. This third generation was further away from the Creator. It learnt what it could about the Creator from the second generation — from its own fathers and mothers — which had been tutored by the first ancestor. As more and more generations were born and older ones died out, a hierarchy of generations emerged; the living generation is always at the bottom of the chain of creation; direct communication between it and the Creator, according to African thinking, is not possible.

The Shona of Zimbabwe say "a chief without juniors is no chief at all". This means that most of the administrative work of the chief must actually be done on his behalf by his juniors. This includes even the trial of cases. He must of course be physically present and listen to all the arguments and finally pass the judgment. Furthermore, when a plaintiff approaches a chief to present his case, it is unthinkable that he can make a direct approach to the person of the chief. He must go through the chief's juniors. The case itself is relayed to the chief through a chain of juniors until it reaches a noble looked upon as only second to the chief who then relays it to the chief himself. The situation is similar in negotiating marriage deals. It is unthinkable that the prospective son-in-law makes a direct approach to his prospective father-in-law. He must do it through an intermediary.

All this is summed up by another Shona saying, "Kukwira gomo hupoterera." This means that if you want to climb to the summit of a high hill or mountain, you should never try to climb straight up the hill (as the crow flies); you should go round and round until you get to the summit. In religious terms God is the highest mountain imaginable. If the Africans do not dare to approach their human superior directly as we have seen above, it is incomprehensible that they can be expected to approach God directly as if He has no juniors. They have only indirect connections with Him, through the generations above them.

This also explains the origins of divine Kingship. The king is divine because he is an important link in a divine chain consisting of the ruling hierarchy of the created order. That whole hierarchy is divine because it is a "conduit" carrying divine authority from the Creator. It is not only the king who is divine; every ancestor carries some divine power. The king is more divine because he is part of the main "conduit" carrying power for distribution to the whole tribe or nation; the ordinary ancestor is less divine because he is part of a "subsidiary conduit" conveying divine power only to his progeny which is a small segment

of the whole community. Without this divine power, the ordinary ancestor would not be able to do anything for his descendants. He would not be different from an ordinary living being. It is the divine element that makes him different.

In a sense, God is very remote indeed. His theoretical distance from the living part of the created order is determined by the number of generations between the first ancestor and the living. But in terms of practical power and influence he is near to the living because the power of the nearest ancestor who deals with the day-to-day affairs of the living, is God's power. Here again, our Kariba electricity analogy is helpful. In terms of physical distance, the Kariba Power Station is certainly very far from Fort Jameson or Kasama or Mongu. But once the Kariba turbines are turned on, it does not take time for electricity to flow to these outlying stations. In terms of time and effect therefore, the Kariba electricity is very close to these stations. It is also necessary to realize that according to African religious philosophy, God's "power turbines" are never switched off and therefore His power is ever flowing to the last terminal point, the youngest and most inferior of the living beings. Therefore, references to God as remote are of theoretical and not practical significance.

To describe God as lazy and indifferent to what happens on earth is like describing the electricity authorities in direct charge of the Kariba Power Station as lazy and indifferent to the electricity needs of the rank and file throughout Zambia. The masses of the Zambians in the rural areas may certainly be tempted to think that this is the case, because they do not know what happens at the Lusaka Major Distribution Centre and at Kariba. They are not even likely to know the actual technicians who are in charge of both Kariba and Lusaka. They may not even be interested to know. But their attitudes to the local technicians who actually serve them are bound to be very different, because they are of immediate concern to them. In addition they actually see them running around and putting things in order for them. Because of their personal knowledge of these local technicians, the rank and file of the people can pass judgment on them. But they cannot do the same with the higher authorities manning Lusaka and Kariba because they do not know them. In actual fact however, it cannot be true that the technicians in the remote outstations are busier and more interested in the welfare of the masses. They are able to keep their lines alive only because the higher officers managing Kariba and Lusaka are alert and efficient. If things go wrong either at Kariba or Lusaka, the technicians in the remote areas immediately become helpless. So, their efficiency and effectiveness depend largely on the efficiency and effectiveness of the senior officials at Kariba and Lusaka. The truth may well be that the technicians and officials at both Kariba and Lusaka are much more alert and busier than those in the remote areas controlling the sub-stations, minor stations and terminal stations. In terms of interest in the welfare of the rank and file of the people, none of them is less interested or more interested than the other. They all have a duty to serve the people and none can afford to be indifferent to the welfare of the people he is intended to serve.

God in Africa is not indifferent to the people He created. He created them for a reason and He would want them to continue multiplying and generally making progress. Inefficiency or indifference on His part adversely affects the whole "power line" to the smallest terminal station in the remotest part of the country. In short, the whole ancestral hierarchy is useless without God, the source of all power and all wisdom.

The logical consequence of this philosophy is that there is no "ancestor worship" in Africa. The Africans worship God, but through His juniors. His juniors are the ancestors who are His creation and who range from the oldest and most powerful to the youngest and least powerful. They are in touch with the masses of the people because they are the direct masters and at the same time the direct servants of the masses. The masses communicate with them regularly and appeal to them for any assistance in their day to day "electricity" problems. Naturally the relations between the masses and the immediate ancestors are much more intimate than those between the masses and the more remote ancestors and the remoter God. This is what misled the foreign observer into construing that the African worshipped the ancestor.

Of course this ancestor must be highly respected and even feared. He is God's instrument of creation because, without him, the living themselves would not be there; he carries God's divine power; he is God's instrument of administration on earth; he is highly interested in the welfare of his progeny and taps God's power for their benefit. All the diplomacy and all the ingenuity of the ancestor is geared towards the protection and general prosperity of the living.

This being the position, it would be most ungrateful of the living part of the created order not to respect, praise and even fear the ancestors who do so much for them. If they disappoint them, they might turn their backs on them, in which case God's blessings will not flow to them since the ancestors themselves are the "conduit". The ancestor participates in God as he participates in man and must be highly respected. God and the ancestor are as one in their determination to protect the established order.

There are two further attributes of the ancestor. He is more than a human being because he is a spirit like God and because God participates in him. A spirit can only communicate effectively with another spirit. Secondly, the ancestor is a human being partly because he was a physical human being and in a way still has the attributes of a human being, because he can take possession of a living being and in that way assume a physical form again. When he does this, he becomes in almost every respect a village elder again. We brew him beer in the way we do for our living fathers and other village elders; we dress him (cover him up with a material) in the way we dress other elders; we buy him a walking stick, a battle axe, a dagger and anything else he used to possess when he was here on earth. As a living father, grandfather or village elder, he advised us and generally cared for us. Today, after death, he still advises us and cares for us in the same capacity. It is a serious crime to ill-treat and starve a

living father, grandfather or village elder and it is believed that serious misfortunes can befall one who does it. It is an equally serious crime to refuse to care for a father, mother, grandfather or village elder after their death.

The second attribute of the ancestor completely misled the foreign scholar. He saw the African brewing beer and dedicating it to the ancestor without any references to God. He saw him dedicating a bull, cow or goat, or items of religious regalia, to the ancestor without any references to God. To this foreign observer, the African was worshipping the ancestor. But in actual fact, he was feeding, clothing and honouring his father, mother, grandmother, grandfather or village elder in the usual way he did when these elders were alive. But when he grows up, it becomes his turn to look after his parents and the village elders. This African who is brewing beer, dedicating animals and other elements of religious regalia is only continuing to play his role as somebody fully grown and therefore looking after his elders. If an African ignores his living mother, father and other elders, they too will lose interest in him with all the consequences that are believed to follow. Likewise, if an African ignores his dead mother, father and other elders, they too will punish him by removing their protective cover. It is all a continuation of the same relationships that prevailed before death between children and parents or grandchildren and grandparents. There is very little new in it, except that human approaches to the deceased have taken a formalized form. There is no need to make references to God because they did not do so in their dealings with each other when they were alive.

I appreciate that it is not easy to distinguish between these two attributes of the ancestor, to regard him as a personal friend without unconsciously being influenced by his position, or as a revered senior without being influenced by your personal relations with him. But in spite of this, the human attributes of the ancestor are discernible as are the relationships between the living and the ancestor. With certain rituals that concern the ancestor as an agent of God the approach is different. A ritual in supplication for rain, the First-Fruits ritual and the Harvest ritual are good examples. Here, the messages are transmitted to the youngest and most recently deceased tribal or national ancestor. He is asked to transmit the message to the one above him and so on, until it reaches the last-remembered who either will be asked to transmit the message to God or will be asked to transmit it to "the unknown ones beyond/above you who should transmit it to God." Unfortunately, for the foreign scholar, most of the day-to-day rituals that are easy to witness concern the ancestor in his second capacity — as a father, mother, or village elder. Because God is not directly involved, the conclusion is reached that the Africans worshipped ancestors.

I have been asked in the past: "The ancestral chain from the point of creation to the living generation must be enormously long; does it not take too long for Africans to transmit their messages to God and for replies to get back to the living part of the created order?" In practice, this is not so, because the chain from the first ancestor is continuous down to the living; the response is therefore instantaneous.

I have indicated that Africa demonstrates remarkable unity in religion. Belief in one God is universal; belief in the power of the ancestor is also universal; rituals such as those connected with the supplication for rain, first fruits and harvests are universal; possession by spirits is also universal. This is remarkable unity. Divine kingship, which is only a reflection of a belief in ancestral power, is also universal.

Religious unity implies African cultural unity in general, because, as we have seen, the African state was a theocracy. All the cultural elements were inter-related, with religion as the cementing force. But cultural unity can only be explained by historical developments and attributable to one of two possible causes: either a foreign conquering power invaded the whole continent and imposed its own culture on the Africans, or Africans have common historical origins. It is a fact that the Bantu populated the continent of Africa after 600 A.D. If the continent was invaded and acculturated by a foreign power, that power could only have done so after 600. If so, that power could never have been a European power because the culture of Europe around 600 A.D. was vastly different from the African culture in question. Shall we infer that the invading power was Arab power, because this was the time the Arabs embarked on general conquest of other regions and continents? But here again, we know that the Arabs were Moslems and they invaded to spread Islam. Bantu culture is not Islamic except in specific areas where Moslems did conquer and spread their religion as has been recorded. Indeed, all this is an academic exercise; the possibility of a foreign power invading and acculturating the continent after 600 A.D., or even between 100 B.C. and 600 A.D., is out of the question. The answer is simply that African religious unity, like general African cultural unity, is explained by common Bantu historical origins in north-east Africa. These Africans could not have originated from any other part of Africa because no such other part had these cultural elements. Africans themselves throughout the continent state that they originated in the north-east. In view of this cultural unity, do we really have a reason for doubting their claims?

(8) THE BANTU TRINITY

This heading refers to the original ethnic TRINITY of the Bantu Family. Scholars who have done real work on African history, customs and traditions are in no doubt that the ancestors of the Bantu had a common ancestry and that they originated from a common geographical locality. A Kenyan African historian, Muriuki, says "The Bantu-speaking peoples of Kenya have a common ancestry with the bulk of the present inhabitants of eastern, central and Southern African". I have gone further than this to say that all the Bantu in all Africa have a common ancestry and I am not abandoning that stance.

From the southern tip of Africa, Monica Wilson working on the Xosa of Transkei, has this to say, "The Bantu of S. Africa show marked similarities in economy, local grouping, law, ritual and symbolism with the cattle people of the Sudan, Uganda and Kenya borderlands. . . . Each item taken alone has

little significance but when there are many, one begins to speculate what ancient movements linked the Sudan with the Transkei, for it is unlikely that the whole pattern has been twice invented." I am arguing throughout this book that the "whole pattern" has not been "twice invented". What we see all over Africa are remnants of a common culture pointing at a common Bantu ancestry and original common geographical locality. But that original Bantu Family had a definite structure. It did not all of a sudden multiply into fifteen, thirty or one hundred tribes. My analysis above points to a Trinity consisting of the Dzivas, the Sokos and the Tongas. Let us now turn to definite Bantu practices which make it clear that the Bantu were aware of their Trinity and that they commemorated this Trinity. Although we have lost the significance of these practices, they are continued to this day in many parts of Africa.

This means that without knowing it, the present Bantu people continue to commemorate their original Trinity.

I am here referring to practices associated with the figure three. I do not believe that there is a tradition that starts from nothing. Every tradition has historical origins, be those origins remembered or not. This is true of the practices associated with the Bantu Trinity.

The most obvious example of the existence of the figure three in Bantu Africa is the fire-place. All African traditional pots are cooked on three and not two or four fire-stones. This means "We are cooking in the name of the Dziva, the Soko and the Tonga". As Monica Wilson warned us above, one tradition on its own, has no significance. But analysed together with other practices, it becomes full of significance. The modern scholar can argue that the Bantu make their pots sit on three and not on two because they balance better on three. But in the end, such an argument proves inadequate and unsound.

If we look at West Africa, we find that when the Ashanti of Ghana crown their king, he is made to sit on the traditional Golden Stool three and not two or four times. This meant and still means (although the people concerned today may not know it) "We are crowning you in the name of the Dziva, the Soko and the Tonga". If we cross over to Zimbabwe, we find that before 1890, chiefs-elect were taken to pools of water before sunrise on the day of installation. There, they were immersed in water three times and then covered with black/white materials (Hungwe materials) and were carried home for the completion of the installation. This again meant, "We crown you in the name of the Dziva, Soko and Tonga" and this was the Shona equivalent to the Ashanti Golden Stool.

When the Shona wash up babies, they throw them into the air three times and this means, "We wash you and rear you in the name of the Dziva, the Soko and the Tonga". Watch the Shona shaking hands traditionally and you will find that they always do it in threes and again this means "I greet you in the name of the Dziva, Soko and Tonga". Watch traditional Shona women greet strangers in some parts of the country such as the northern and western provinces, you will find that as they say words of greeting at a distance, they bend their knees three and not two or four times. When Shona women ululate (kupururudza) for the

great spirits or mediums of the land (makombwe and majukwa), they do so in shrills of threes. Their men clap hands in rhythms of threes. All this means, "We honour you in the name of the Dziva, Tonga and Soko". Furthermore, each medium of these major spirits is required to possess a three-headed stick (tsvimbo). The one on the cover of this book is an example of it. To the medium concerned, it means, "I operate in the name of the Dziva, the Soko and the Tonga". By possessing this stick and by using it, he is summoning the assistance, guidance and power of all the three ancestries.

Towards the end of 1981, I watched President Moi of Kenya visiting the Tana River Scheme. He was met on the way by throngs of Kenyan tribesmen who were singing and chanting. But right through, the dominant feature was the clapping of hands in rhythms of threes. In traditional terms this meant, "We welcome you and greet you in the name of the Dziva, the Soko and the Tonga". Next, I watched Nigerians doing their traditional dances. Here, again, the dominant feature was the clapping of hands in rhythms of threes. Again, in traditional terms, it mean "We rejoice and dance in the name of the Dziva, the Soko and the Tonga".

I have picked on a few examples most of which you can actually check on today. I am sure you can find numerous other examples of the figure three in Africa. Here indeed are Africans commemorating their original Trinity! Are we going to be so naive as to say that this figure three was "invented" fifteen or fifty times over?

This Trinity has archaeological evidence to support it too. The only problem so far has been that we were not aware of the existence of a Trinity in Africa and so some of the archaeological discoveries did not mean what they mean to us now after the discovery of this Trinity. To give a few examples, in Zimbabwe, what are known as Zimbabwe Periods I and II together with Leopard's Cope and Gokomere cultures are well-known to represent one cultural stratum. In my "From Mutapa to Rhodes", I have stated that this represents Dziva-Hungwe culture who were the first Bantu people to occupy this country. The next cultural stratum in Zimbabwe is called Zimbabwe, Period III. This is the stratum associated with the construction of the Zimbabwe Fort and I stated that it represented the arrival and occupation of this country by the Soko-Mbire Family. These were new invaders who drove the Dziva-Hungwe people towards S. Africa and Botswana. Zimbabwe Period IV represents no more than the evolution of Mbire culture.

What is missing is a stratum representing the Tonga Family. But this should not surprise us now in view of what we have come across above. The early Tonga did not become a feature of Zimbabwe but Mozambique. The invading Soko Mbire Family drove them to the south along the east coast. Their descendants are the Mozambiquan and S. African Tonga whom we came across earlier and still close to the east coast. We saw some of them entering Zimbabwe through the south-eastern corner (the Hlengwe) but much later and again from Mozambique.

There can thus be no doubt that the early Tonga were not a feature of Zimbabwe. The majority of the Tonga in Zimbabwe today are a feature of the Zambezi Valley and are closely related to the Zambian Tonga. They spilled across the Zambezi into this country much later and were not able to penetrate into the interior. That a Tonga cultural stratum should be found missing in the interior of Zimbabwe should therefore not be surprising.

If we cross over to East Africa, we find something quite interesting. Two Belgian archaeologists did some work here and discovered three definite archaeological strata. They are Jean Hiernaux and Emma Maquet. They found the earliest Bantu cultural stratum which they called 'A'. On top of it, they found a second cultural stratum representing a new group of Bantu people but with a different culture. They called this stratum 'B'. Still on top of it, they found a third and later stratum again representing a new Bantu people with a different culture. They called this stratum 'C'. So these two archaeologists ended up with an archaeological trinity representing three early Bantu cultures in East Africa.

I have not scrutinized the evidence closely enough to say at present which stratum represents the Dziva, which the Soko and which the Tonga. But in the light of these other discoveries, the discovery of an archaeological trinity is fascinating and assumes great significance. I have no reason to doubt that these strata represent Dziva, Soko and Tonga segments.

Any scholar who believes that the Bantu have a common ancestry (and they appear to be very many) implicitly admits that they originated from a common geographical locality. How else could this happen if the original two ancestors, one male and one female, were a thousand miles apart?

It is a fact that a single family does not and can not all of a sudden multiply into ten or twenty tribes. The mother and father are the starting point of a tribe. The family grows until it constitutes a sub-tribe. The sub-tribe grows until it constitutes a tribe. The tribe then splits up into two or three or four segments. These segments in turn grow into tribes and also split up. This is common knowledge to us for a new sub-tribes and tribes were forming all over Africa when we were overtaken by the events associated with the New Imperialism of the late 19th century. Indeed, has the formation of sub-tribes and tribes come to an end even today? What were mere individual families in 1890 in Zimbabwe have today grown into sub-tribes in terms of numbers. Colonialism of course interfered with geographical contiguity that went with the formation of new sub-tribes and tribes. But the important point is that each family, as it grows into a tribe, splits up into a few segments first and these segments, given plenty of land in old Africa, almost always grew into independent tribes. The Bantu Trinity suggests that the original Bantu Family originally split into three tribes that were very aware of their common origins and common geographical contiguity. Each of these three acquired cultural traits of its own; each acquired its own identity. In due course, each of these three tribes split up into segments which in turn grew into tribes. Although each new segment started to make its own

history and to acquire new cultural traits, it at the same time maintained the major characteristics of the parent tribe. The result today is that the Dziva the Soko and the Tonga have each maintained their major cultural traits such as association with water, association with land and matriliney and are up to a point still identifiable as distinct groups to this day. That the majority of the Bantu can still be traced to the Dziva, Soko and Tonga Trinity can not be disputed.

There is no evidence of the original Bantu Family splitting into two, four or six segments. But certainly there is enough evidence to suggest that it split into three segments that in due course became independent tribes from which all of us later segmented.

The reasons for the splintering of the original three tribes can easily be guessed. The effects of the Arab invasion of north-east Africa have been discussed. You should also realize that some of these Bantu people were pastoralists. As their numbers and animals multiplied, they needed more land for pastures. Naturally, they encroached on more and more land thereby moving further and further away from their original parent dynasty and establishing a tributary dynasty for their immediate needs in their locality. In due course, segments broke away from them, moved further afield and did exactly the same. We should realize too that land was plentiful in Africa and that this in itself encouraged migration from one locality to another. But it was not everybody who moved; it was segments that did so and others remained behind. This no doubt culminated in the severance of relationships, formally or informally, between them. Just imagine what would have happened in the ranks of the Xosa of S. Africa if the Boers had not dammed them back after 1652 and if the African land mass continued further south! This helps you to understand what the Bantu did as they migrated away from the Nile Valley to the south and west without major human hindrances in their way.

Some of these Bantu segments were agriculturalists. Others were both agriculturalists and pastoralist. These people had no way of fertilizing their soils. They resorted to shifting cultivation. As the density of population made shifting cultivation difficult or impossible, segments broke away and established themselves on new land a fair distance away from the parent dynasty.

In due course, they grew into tribes and their own segments repeated the process. This means that segments of the existing dynasties were always on the move establishing themselves on new land. This represented growth, territorial expansion and migration. For as long as land was plentiful, this process was to continue.

The third factor was that of disagreement within a tribe or sub-tribe. One of the greatest sources of disagreement was succession to chieftainship. Very often there were fights between factions over who was to succeed the late chief. The defeated party migrated to establish a new dynasty a fair distance away under its own candidate. The "fair distance" could be a hundred kilometres or more.

Such a move could mark the beginning of severance of relations between this new dynasty and the parent dynasty. Quarrels over booty, captured in war could precipitate fights resulting in a similar migration of the defeated party. Many quarrels were over women and resulted in a similar development. For instance, a man of standing could fall in love with the wife of another man of standing. Each had his own following. A fight could start between them and one party was defeated. The defeated party ran away to establish itself beyond the reach of the winning party. One group could accuse another of sorcery or witchcraft. The injured party could migrate to establish itself on a new piece of land outside the control of the other party. Alternatively, the two parties fought over it and the defeated party hived away and migrated. This continued to happen up to the colonial era. It is still happening today except that it is largely now confined to individual families and not tribes or whole segments of tribes.

An equally important cause of large scale migration was inter-tribal conflict. The causes for this were many. It could be desire to capture the domestic animals of another tribe; it could be desire to capture and take to wife the daughters of another tribe; it could be envy of the land of the neighbouring tribe; it could even be conflict of personalities between neighbouring chiefs, it could be a conflict over hunting grounds. Whatever the reasons might have been, conflicts took place between tribes. Some of them were defeated and had to migrate and re-establish themselves beyond the reach of the victors. Some tribes were shattered and regrouped in three, four or more segments very far apart. This caused not only segmentation but large scale migration as well. Naturally, the migrations take the direction of lowest pressure. In Africa in the early days therefore, most migration took the southern or western direction from the Nile Valley. These were the directions not yet occupied by strong Iron Age people.

I am here briefly and in very general terms summarizing the factors accounting for tribal segmentation, fragmentation and migration. We have, all over Africa, lots of examples to prove the validity of all these factors. What I am here saying is that as a result of one or more of these factors, each of the original three Bantu Tribes, Dziva, Soko and Tonga, segmented and segmented over and over again without end and at the same time migrated and migrated over and over again until they occupied all Africa. As segment after segment was shunted this way and that way, the segments from the three got inter-woven together except in South Africa and Botswana where there was still fresh land to occupy. This is why to this day, the identification of members of each of the three Families is easier in Southern Africa than elsewhere in Africa.

As a result, in one country, you find a big majority of members of one Family. In another, you find a balance between two or all three. Generally, you find representatives of all three in practically every country south of the Sahara in varying proportions. This is what prompted my statement in "From Mutapa to Rhodes" that Zimbabwe, in ethnic terms, is a microcosm of Bantu Africa. The onus is on those who do not accept my argument (a) to prove that this is all nonsense (b) to give us their own theses and prove their validity.

EPILOGUE

"No doubt what I have dared to put on paper here is a challenge to more than the Shona. It is a challenge to the historians and anthropologists all over the continent of Africa, and to the scholars the world over who are interested in what is happening on this continent. If the challenge is taken up, it might mark the beginning of "A new History of Africa".

I wrote the above words in January 1978 when I was completing "From Mutapa to Rhodes". It is August 1982 as I write the Epilogue to "The Birth of Bantu Africa". Whoever is acquainted with the material in my earlier book can not fail to be impressed by developments that have taken place since my submission of that earlier manuscript for publication. It is my hope that this new book on Africa will quicken research on the history of the continent. I look upon "From Mutapa to Rhodes" as not much more than an eye opener for Africa. The "Birth of Bantu Africa" possibly takes us a long step towards the anticipated "New History of Africa" and may well mark the beginning of that new history. This makes it clear that I do not look upon our history task on Africa as completed. But it looks as if we are starting to see our goals, or some of the major ones. If so, then we have definite directions along which to work. I think that the absence of such directions has been a major stumbling block in the way of our search for the history of this continent. The history of Africa does not start in the year 10 000 B.C. or even 100 000 or 500 000 B.C. It starts with the creation of the continent itself, whenever that was. Of course, the larger part of that history may concern animals. It is not my intention or hope that we will manage to discover all that early history. It is largely the history of the Negro that the historian and the anthropologist are and will be dealing with. This is so because Africa is largely a Negro continent.

Whatever future research may discover about the history of the continent, one factor is constant and will remain so. That factor is the ubiquity in Africa of the Bushmen, now called the San people. It would be biased of us not to admit that Africa, for a very long time, was no more than a Bushmen continent. Although we know little about the early history of these people, evidence is conclusive that they once occupied the whole continent. They are the only people associated with the rock-paintings that are familiar to us, and these paintings are everywhere on the continent; this in itself is conclusive evidence that these short men were everywhere in Africa long before the continent was populated by the Negro race. It is likely that they too started in one corner of the continent and gradually spread to other corners. That corner might also have been north-east Africa; but at the same time it might have been the southern tip or even the Congo region. There is nothing definite we can say about their origins but, at least, we are in a position to say that the continent was once entirely theirs.

A second race of taller and lighter complexioned people also started in Africa, in the Nile Valley. The exact identity of this race is not known. Some chose to call it the Hamite race. Others are now suggesting that the word Hamite should

be dropped from usage because no such people ever existed in Africa. But generally all are agreed that a race of tall people with a white morphology existed in Egypt many, many years ago. There is archaeological evidence to prove this. A human skull or nearly-human skull said to be about two million years old has been unearthed in north-east Africa. Suggestions that the whole human race might even have started in the Nile Valley have been made and it looks as if there is sound archaeological evidence for them. For my purposes here, the name we give to this race is not very material. What is material is that a race of tall people with a white morphology was created on the continent of Africa and specifically in the Nile Valley. The position appears to be that, by the year 10 000 B.C., there were two distinct races on the continent of Africa — a race of short people associated with rock-paintings and a race of tall people with a white morphology confined to the Nile Valley in what was later to be Egypt. This is important because all else appears to be a result of the interaction between these two.

The inter-action I am concerned with here has nothing to do with acculturation but commingling. I have already said that the San people (Bushmen) were at one time everywhere in Africa. I even went further to suggest that they too could have started in Egypt. Whether they started in Egypt or not, the fact that they were at one time throughout Africa means that they come into contact in Egypt with the second race but of taller stature and a white morphology. They commingled and this brought about a third race of a people who were not as short or as dark in complexion as the San and at the same time not as tall or as light in complexion as the Hamites. This marked the beginning of the race we today call Hottentot. Further commingling brought about the Negro, the subject of this book.

Both the Hamites and the Negroes were physically stronger than the San. By the year 3 000 B.C. the civilization of Egypt was starting. This means that ideas of government and better organization were developing among the Hamites and Negroes. Greater physical strength and better organization made these Hamites and Negroes militarily stronger than the San people. By virtue of this, they drove the San further to the south and west of the Nile Valley. Earlier in this book, we saw an Egyptian southern adventurer capturing a dwarf in the regions further to the south, an event of great interest to the Pharaoh of the time. This means that the San people were becoming a very rare feature of the peripheral regions of the Upper Nile Valley. They could only have been so because these shorter and weaker people were drifting away from the stronger and better organized Hamites and Negroes. This is supported by the fact that in the southern direction, this drift away from the stronger races continued as the Negroes trekked into the south in the 18th century, as is evidenced by the position south of the Limpopo in the middle of that century. The drift of the San away from the Nile Valley was not only in a southerly direction. There was also a major drift westwards, especially towards Darfur and the Lake Chad region.

That the Khoikoi (Hottentots) are a younger race than the Bushmen cannot be doubted. Whilst there is evidence to prove that the Bushmen have been everywhere in Africa, it is not true that the Khoikoi have been to every region. For instance, they do not seem to have been known in Malawi, Zimbabwe and Mozambique at all. Although they are a feature of Botswana, they seem to have come into that country from the south in the 19th century and not from the north, as they moved away from the advance of the Boers from the south. But they too had originally come from the north. They were behind the Bushmen in the advance to the south and the Bantu were immediately behind them. From the north-east, they seem to have diverted west into the Congo Region. From here, they drifted into Angola and Namibia and then into South Africa. In this way, they avoided the eastern and central regions of Southern Africa. At the South African frontier, the Hottentots were certainly behind the Bushmen when the Boers settled at the Cape. This reflects the sequence of the migrations from the north, and the sequence itself also reflected the order of creation in Africa.

So by the year 1 000 B.C. there were four distinct races in Africa. This does not mean that commingling came to a halt, but whatever further inter-mixing took place only helped to modify the features of the already extant four races. The Negro continued to commingle with the Hamite; the Negro continued to commingle with the Hottentot; the Hottentot continued to commingle with the San. It could even be said that the Hamite was edged out of existence largely by the Negro. It is a fact that Africa has people of all heights, all complexions and all statures, ranging from the pure San to the near-Hamite as represented by the Galla today.

From the very start of African history, therefore, the dominant human element in Africa was a feature of north-east Africa and closely associated with the Nile Valley. It may even be correct to say that the entire human element in Africa started in north-east Africa. The Hamite started as a feature of north-east Africa; the San might not necessarily have started there but were certainly also a feature of the region; the Negro started there; the Hottentot started in north-east Africa. This is an important point that explains who the Bantu were and whence they originated. If they had originated from everywhere in Africa, we would today not be talking about the birth of Bantu Africa.

Although Bantu Africa was born at a particular time — between 600 A.D. and 1 000 A.D., I have not suggested at any time that there were no Negro peoples filtering out of the Nile Valley before 600 A.D. Indeed, the distinction I made between Negro and Bantu is a result of this realization that Negro people filtered out of the Nile Valley earlier. To look for ethnic differences between the Negro and the Bantu is to look for something that does not exist in history. I have stated that all the Bantu are Negro but that not all the Negroes are Bantu, because although the ethnic origin of the Bantu is also the ethnic origin of the Negro, the Negroes who are called Bantu are so-called because of particular cultural traits not associated with their cousins who are simply called Negro.

The difference came about because by the year 600 A.D., when Egypt and Kush had developed a distinct culture which had grown over the previous five hundred years or so, segments of the Negro race had already left the area and were therefore not part of this culture.

By the year 100 A.D. Egypt (which incorporated the bigger part of Ethiopia) had acquired iron-technology and were Sun-worshippers. In addition, they knew something about dry-stone building as is evidenced by the presence of the pyramids and other stone constructions. But their iron-technology belonged to the early Iron Age. It lacked certain refinements that became a feature of the period around 600 A.D. Furthermore, both Egypt and Kush were not Christian because Christianity had not been introduced yet. But their kings were divine. At the same time, the language or group of languages spoken around 100 A.D. was different from that spoken in 600 A.D. because certain elements that were a feature of the period around 600 had not yet been introduced by the year 100. For instance, the Axumite conquest of Kush between 300 and 400 could not have failed to have a linguistic impact on the Kushitic language. What all this means is that the Negroes who left the Nile Valley before let us say A.D. 300 were definitely products of Kushitic civilization, some of whose elements were divine monarchy, Sun-worshipping and therefore association with the ram, iron-technology and a Kushitic language that had not yet acquired the major characteristics of the present Bantu languages. It also means that the Negroes who left the Nile Valley after 600 A.D. were also definitely products of a Kushitic civilization whose major elements were divine monarchy, more advanced iron-technology (Later Iron Age technology), Christianity (tinged with a fine filament of Sun-worshipping), dry-stone building (together with irrigation and terracing) and a language that had all the major characteristics of the Bantu languages. This is where the differences between the so-called "true Negroes" and the Bantu lie. One group is a product of an earlier civilization; the other is a product of the same earlier civilization plus new elements.

In view of this it cannot really be surprising if archaeologists found evidence of occupation of isolated parts of Africa by Iron-Age Negro peoples as early as 100 A.D. or 200 A.D. My argument is not that this should not be expected, but that Africa was still not Negro, but San. Even more important, those scattered Negroes were not Bantu and therefore Bantu Africa had not yet been born. I have traced, earlier on, the crises that troubled the Nile Valley after 1 000 B.C. My aim was to show the factors that forced the Negro peoples to filter out of the region even before the major Bantu Explosion of the period after 600 A.D. I am therefore not of the impression that no Negro peoples migrated away from Kush and the neighbourhood before 600 A.D. Otherwise, there would be no distinction between Negro and Bantu.

If we have made a breakthrough in African history, that breakthrough lies in the discovery that the Bantu were originally divided into three great families, the Soko Masters of the Land, the Dziva Masters of the Water and Matrilineal

segment called Tonga in Central and Southern Africa. That three Great African Families did exist in Africa is unquestionable. This is the greatest significance of my "From Mutapa to Rhodes". If we look at the whole East African belt from the Great Lakes to the Limpopo around 900 A.D., we find the entire area occupied by members of the three families only. The Sokos were still around the Great Lakes in Tanganyika to the east of Lake Tanganyika and occupying a district which they called MBIRE after their grandfather MAMBIRI. The Tonga were further south and occupied the region to the west of Lake Malawi. The Dziva Family had already crossed the Zambezi about a century before and occupied the region between the Zambezi and Limpopo and were confined largely to eastern Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

The religious revolution that is currently taking place in Zimbabwe makes this position very clear. The Mbire Soko Tribe was established in Tanganyika by Murenga Sororenzou (from whom the word Chi-murenga was derived). This Murenga was then migrating from Kenya. He has just become an active spirit again and for the first time since he caused the revolution of 1896-7 which was given his name. He knows his cousins and the Soko segments which remained north of the Zambezi River. Furthermore, this Mbire Soko Tribe was led out of Tanganyika for the south by Chaminuka, Murenga's son and the greatest of the Shona mhondoro in Zimbabwe. It was under the leadership of Chaminuka that the Mbire Soko Tribe drove the Tonga people further to the south and then diverted them to the west and drove them up the Zambezi River along the northern bank. Fortunately, this Chaminuka has taken possession of a medium the first one since his last medium was killed by the Ndebele in 1883. He too tells of other people that he came across on the way towards the Zambezi and these were the matrilineal Tonga people. Fortunately too, Tonga conflicts with the Mbire Soko people are enshrined in one of the oldest and greatest Mbire Soko traditional tunes — Vana vaPfumojena vakauya — and this I produced in "From Mutapa to Rhodes". There can therefore be no doubt that there were matrilineal Tonga people between Lake Tanganyika and the Zambezi river around the year 900 A.D.

South of the Zambezi River, there was only one tribe around 900 A.D., the Dziva-Hungwe Family. Reports of them are enshrined in Arab documents that make references to the Kingdom of the Waqlinji around Sofala in about 900 A.D. This is the family that was invaded by the Mbire Soko Family about 1 000 A.D. The man who led the Mbire then and who became the first Mutapa in Zimbabwe was Chaminuka's son called Kutamadzoka. The title of the Mbire Soko paramounts was NEMBIRE and so this one was Nembire Kutamadzoka. He was called MUTAPA by the Dziva-Hungwe Family that he invaded and conquered. Fortunately, too, he has taken up a medium and he relates the early history of this country. Today, the descendants of the Mbire Soko people do not hide the fact that their predecessors in Zimbabwe were the Dziva-Hungwe people. The Dziva-Hungwe themselves do not doubt that they were the first Bantu people to occupy the region south of the Zambezi River.

To verify the validity of all these claims, look at the position as it stands today in southern Africa. The Tonga, whom the Mbire Soko people claim to have driven up the Zambezi Valley, are still there in the valley in Zambia and no Bantu group can claim to have settled in the Zambian belt south of Lusaka and as far as Livingstone before these Tonga people. The Mbire Soko Family claims to have taken over the region between the Zambezi and the Limpopo down to the east coast from the Dziva-Hungwe people around 1 000 A.D. To prove this, even today, about 85% of the Zimbabweans and Mozambicans are descendants of the Mbire Mutapas. Tracing the existing communities back to their original Great Bantu Families was the major objective of "From Mutapa to Rhodes". Furthermore, the Mbire Soko people claim to have driven the Dziva-Hungwe people to the south and west. If this is true, we should then find their descendants somewhere south and west of Zimbabwe, and we do not fail to find them. We have in this book examined Botswana and S. Africa and have discovered that about 90% of the Tswana and 90% of the S. African Bantu are members of the Dziva-Hungwe Family. In view of this we have no reason to doubt that the claims made by both Mbire Soko and Dziva-Hungwe people are basically correct.

The existence of only three distinct family groups in all eastern Africa from the Great Lakes to the Limpopo immediately makes one wonder if all the other Bantu are also not segments of those three. We examined Malawi and Zambia and found clear descendants of these three Great Bantu Families; we examined Zaire and we found a community still called Soko to this day; we crossed over to West Africa and saw that Mali was an empire of matrilineal people (called Tonga in Central and Southern Africa) and that the Songhay Empire was created by the Sokos who were also called the "Masters of the Land" and fishermen. We also noted that there is to this day a community in Nigeria called the Isoko people and that the "god" of the Nupe tribe is called Soko like Murenga of the Shona. We came across a Dziva-Hungwe complex referred to as the "Masters of the Water" like their cousins in Southern Africa. Realizing that these West African people parted company with their Zimbabwean or S. African cousins about 1 400 years ago, this cannot fail to impress us as remarkable. The conclusion it must lead us to is that all Bantu Africa is populated entirely by descendants of the three Great Bantu Families and I have no reason to doubt that this is the case.

In fact, I would claim that all Negro Africa (rather than Bantu Africa) is populated entirely by segments of the three Great Bantu Families. I am referring to the Bantu as the Negroes who migrated from Azania (or Kush) soon after 600 A.D. But this should not mean to us that the three Great Bantu Families came into existence around the year 600 A.D.; it should not mean that the Negroes divided into three Great Families around 600 A.D. It is possible that the segmentation into three and the severance of relations between them all alluded to earlier had taken place 500 or even 1 000 years earlier. I believe that the founding fathers (and a mother representing the matrilineal segment) were the immediate children of Kush mentioned in the Arab migration legend

that we came across earlier. If I am right, then it is possible that the segmentation took place as early as about 800 B.C. — about the time of the establishment of the kingdom of Kush which is likely to have been named after its founding father. By 600 A.D. each of these three Great Families had grown significantly and this is why each was able to have segments that migrated both to the west and south. So even the Negroes who were not Bantu (who migrated out of the Nile Valley before the Great Bantu Explosion of the period soon after 600 A.D.) were segments of the three Great Bantu Families. In other words, every African is a member of one or the other of the three Great Bantu Families.

A word on the Tonga today is necessary. It seems as if they are the smallest of the Great Bantu Families today. They are a small fraction in S. Africa; they may be about 1% in Botswana; they do not seem to have a bigger representation in Zimbabwe; I put them at 2% in Zimbabwe; they are again a small minority in Malawi; and I estimate them to be about 50% in Zambia. They are in the majority only in Namibia where the Ambo are still matrilineal to this day and the Herero are semi-matrilineal and semi-patrilineal like the Hlengwe of South-east Zimbabwe. It looks as if their second greatest representation is in Zambia. I doubt if their representation anywhere else in Africa is any higher than in Central Africa or Southern Africa. In view of the fact that the three Great Families were born at exactly the same time, one wonders why the Tonga should be such a minority compared with the other two. The answer must simply be "matriliney".

When Tonga men marry, they migrate from their homes to their wives' homes. The children are not really theirs but belong to their wives. This does not make it easy for a husband to marry many wives because he would have to spend all his life travelling between homes. Although polygamy exists, the number of wives each man can marry must remain very small. This inevitably restricts the growth of each man's progeny. On the other hand, the Sokos and Dzivas are patrilineal and patrilocal. All the women move to the homes of their husbands. It is therefore possible for each man who has the means to have as many as twenty or more wives. Inevitably, the system lends itself to great expansion. Furthermore, in the patrilineal societies, many wives and many children enhance the social position of the father. Therefore there is an incentive for many children on the part of the father. This is not the case with the matrilineal system. Many children do not enhance the social position of the father because they are not really his. All this has affected the expansion of the matrilineal Tonga Family and accounts for its small size compared with the other two.

The major task of the historian and the ethnologist now is to trace the African communities all over Africa back to the original three Great Bantu Families, such as I have done in Zimbabwe, Botswana and S. Africa. This is the only way in which they can prove beyond doubt the validity or otherwise of my conclusion that Africa is populated by segments of only three original Negro families descending from the same man. Where the totem system is fully developed such as in Southern Africa, this is not a difficult task. Where it is not highly developed or where it does not exist at all it is a difficult task.

One area that needs attention in this respect is the Congo region. I do not believe that it is possible to really clarify the history of the origins of some of the communities in Zambia, Angola and Namibia before first understanding that of Zaire. The Congo region must be a meeting place, a "confluence" of segments of communities from West Africa, East Africa and the Lake Chad area. In turn, segments of communities from Zaire migrated into Zambia and Angola and then from Angola into Namibia. Therefore the early history of these countries is closely associated with that of the Congo region.

Archaeological research must go on. Much has been discovered through this discipline but no doubt more awaits discovery. Moreover, now that we have a good picture of the African groups that have populated Africa, our archaeological finds are going to have much more meaning than before. Now that we know some of the important symbols associated with segments of the Africans, such as the association of the Dziva people with the bird and fish and the association of the Sokos with the snake and lion, aspects of our archaeological finds may easily fall into place and so make early African history more intelligible.

Above all, great importance should be attached to traditional religion as a source of early African history. There is no doubt in my mind that in the absence of written records traditional religion is the most reliable source of our ancient history. I am sure that were it not for the religious revolution taking place in Zimbabwe, I would never have been able to unearth this history of Zimbabwe. What we should understand and appreciate is that traditional religion is not independent of African history. Every religious tradition has historical origins. Furthermore, there is no religious figure whose religious significance has no historical origins. Murenga or Chaminuka of the Shona, Nyikang of the Shilluk, Kintu of the Ganda and Shango of the Yoruba serve as good examples of this. They were cardinal figures, historical figures, in the history of the tribes associated with them. Today as a result of these historical positions, they are virtual gods, great divinities, in the religious circles of the communities associated with them. We cannot discover important aspects of our traditional religious practices, rituals and figures without at the same time unearthing equally important aspects of our history.

Throughout Africa, claims of north-eastern origins have been made. Examine some traditions and you will find that they have associations with the east or north-east. For instance, in many parts of West Africa, corpses are buried facing the east and this is meant to associate the deceased with his ancestors who came from the east; communities in Southern Africa such as the Lovedu bury their important figures with their faces turned northward where their ancestors came from. These practices have a historical foundation. Sun-worship and association with the ram are well-known to be associated with Egypt and Kush; divine kingship which is universal in Africa is known to have started in Egypt and then it spread to Kush; the ancient centre of iron-technology is well-known to be Meroe, the capital of Kush and from here it

spread to the rest of Africa; dry-stone building, terracing and hillside irrigation are features of north-east Africa but spread to other parts of Africa; we are called Bantu because we speak a related group of languages. But that group of languages is known to be Kushiitic and therefore has north-eastern origins. Christianity is well-known to have been introduced into north-east Africa after 300 A.D. and before 600 A.D. For our ancestors to associate themselves with Christianity must mean early association with North-East Africa. Above all, African traditional religion demonstrates African unity. That cultural unity can only be explained by common historical origins. Because the divine element is dominant in this traditional religion, these historical origins must be associated with Egypt and Kush.

Indeed we are Kushites. But the Kushites were genetically and culturally children of Egypt. Therefore, we are Egyptians as well. The early history of Africa cannot be unravelled independently of that of Kush and Egypt. If this is attempted, the history of Black Africa, and of the African himself, is suspended like a building without a foundation. It is unfortunate that the colonial administrator did not know this and did not bother to find out. The result was that he was quick to describe the African as a savage and adamantly refused to believe that he could have constructed such imposing structures as Great Zimbabwe, Mapungubwe and associated forts. He did not believe that the African could have been responsible for the terraces and irrigation works found in many parts of Africa, for he had failed to realize that this African was descended from one of the earliest and possibly greatest of the ancient civilizations of the world.

Indeed, the African of the period 600 to 1 000 A.D. may have been more civilized and more cultivated than his European counterpart. Then, barbarism was ravaging Europe, Roman civilization was crumbling and travelling from one part of the continent to another was extremely dangerous. This was the time the Africans in West, North and South-East Africa were embarking on the famous "Silent Trade" whose success depended on absolute honesty on either part.

The gold that was the pillar of this trade in West Africa came from the Forest belt and was carried the whole way across the desert to north Africa; the gold that was the pillar of the south-eastern trade came from the interior of what is today Zimbabwe. It was carried right from the interior to the coast and beads, materials and shells of all sorts were carried the whole way back home. A people capable of doing this could never have been savages. The fact that this trade ever started and grew for centuries is in itself an indication of the order, the discipline, the self-control and the respect for human life that prevailed in Africa at the time. The fact that imposing dry-stone structures were built and continued to be constructed in the 17th and 18th centuries as well is an indication of the peace and order that prevailed in parts of Africa.

All this came to a halt with the advent of the "civilized man", the Portuguese, on the African scene. It was the Portuguese who destroyed the West African trade in gold and salt; it was they who destroyed the Zenj Empire and brought the trade of the east coast to a halt; it was they who destroyed the Congo and Angola by offering the Gospel with one hand and slavery with the other; it was they who started the slave trade in West Africa; it was the European in general who plundered especially West Africa through his slave trading activities and in that way brought African cultural development to a halt by diverting all African energies and attention to this trade. Which of these two, the African and the European, was more civilized in essential details?

It is clear that those of us in Zimbabwe who reject a common ancestry for the African Zimbabweans simply do not know their history and in the interests of the country should remain silent. If they are neither Soko or Dziva or Tonga originally, then they can only be either descendants of the Arabs or of the Portuguese. I hope too that many will discover through this book that our regionalism and tribalism are baseless and shameful. One can now assert categorically that Zimbabwe, in ethnic terms, is a microcosm of Bantu Africa. Bantu Africa is a child of Kush and, in turn, Kush is a child of Egypt. Therefore, whether we like it or not, we are distant Egyptians.

NOTES

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